

**06/22/07**

### **Bite victim not seeking dog's death**

William Flick, who was attacked by the German shepherd awaiting destruction by Sarasota County Animal Services, isn't asking that Zeus be destroyed.

It's not his decision, however. Bob Elek, a spokesman for Verizon, Flick's employer, said the dog's fate isn't up to them, it's up to the county.

Zeus, who belongs to Ana and Gilberto Otero of Nokomis, is to be destroyed because its attack is considered under Florida Statute 767.13 to have left severe injuries.

A representative of the Sarasota County sheriff's office said the dog's destruction has not been scheduled, despite Ana Otero's belief Zeus was to be destroyed June 22.

#### **The attack**

Elek said Flick, who deferred questions to his employer, was bitten eight times by Zeus, and Flick said he did nothing to provoke the dog.

Flick was on the property to fix some cables outside the Oteros' home. According to Elek, Gilberto Otero asked Flick to come inside to look at some cables. Flick refused because the Oteros are not the owners of the property and can't request work be done.

Flick petted Zeus while they were on the Oteros' porch, and when he took his hands off the dog, it attacked.

According to Elek, Flick was bitten in the groin first; Ana Otero said Zeus never bit Flick in the groin.

Elek also said Flick was bitten on the knee, causing him to fall down. When he threw his arms over his head in protection, the dog bit him on the elbow down to the bone, removing a piece of flesh.

Flick has nerve damage to the elbow area, Elek said, but he doesn't know if the damage is permanent.

Elek said Flick told him he was scared for his life during the attack.

In a prior interview Ana Otero questioned how Flick's injuries could be severe, as he did not get any stitches. Elek said Flick was supposed to leave his wounds open so bacteria would not grow inside the wounds.

According to Elek, Flick was not able to do his normal job for five weeks. He was out for one week and on light duty for a month after that.

#### **'Multiple bites'**

Judge Phyllis Galen, who denied the Oteros' appeal of Zeus' destruction, said in an e-mail interview that she was satisfied the standards of Florida law had been met.

"Florida Statutes define severe injury in section 767.11(3)," Galen wrote. "Multiple bites were proven in this case, thus qualifying as severe injury.

"While this type case is extremely difficult for all involved, it is the responsibility of the judge to follow the law."

Contrary to statements from Ana Otero and Elise Matthes, president of Sarasota in Defense of Animals, that a request had been made to send Zeus to an out-of-state facility, Galen said no attorney in this case has made such a request.

SDA has started a campaign to get Gov. Charlie Crist to "pardon" Zeus; Crist has yet to issue his decision.

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