

## Family kills pet wolf in attack

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As his name implies, Taz had a bit of a wild streak.

That rambunctious approach to life, though, was his downfall, after the canine, which was 90 percent wolf and 10 percent Alaskan malamute, died Friday after turning on the people who were taking care of him while his owner was away.

"This is not the type of animal you should have as a pet," said Buddy Stone, 29, who whacked Taz in the head four or five times with a baseball bat as his father, Michael, held the dog/wolf in a bear hug after he got loose from his cable.

The animal was owned by Steve Stone, one of four homeowners on the family's sprawling 12-acre Bartlett Street estate. Steve Stone left for a trip to Russia on Friday morning, only a few hours before Taz attacked his sitters.

When the Stones saw Taz break free from the cable, they called on the owner's father, Euclid Stone, 81, who had fostered a good relationship with Taz since his son brought him home as a puppy from Alaska several years ago.

But Taz turned on Euclid, which led Buddy and Michael to spring into action to try to help him break free of Taz's glare. As Michael approached Taz, the dog growled at him and tried to bite him, said his son Buddy.

Buddy, who was carrying a baseball bat, swung at Taz, hitting his legs in the hope of startling him enough to end the attack, but it only angered the canine further, said Buddy.

"Most dogs, if you hit them with something, it stuns them," said Buddy. "This didn't even faze him."

Taz turned toward Buddy, who started punching and kicking the animal to try to subdue him. As he did that, Michael walked behind the dog, put Taz into a bear hug and pried his jaw open. He then called for his son to deliver the fatal blows. At some point during the melee, Taz bit off the tip of Michael's right pinky.

Michael also ended up with puncture wounds on his right arm, said his wife, Laurie. Michael himself wouldn't talk about the harrowing experience, but none of the family members seemed surprised by the violent episode.

"He's not friendly with anyone," said Laurie Stone.

Family members called police during the scrum, but Taz was dead by the time officers arrived at the property.

Because he remains overseas, Steve Stone still doesn't know what happened to his dog, said Laurie Stone. While family members are not looking forward to telling Steve about Taz's demise, they saw little choice in the matter.

Taz's wolf heritage meant Steve Stone needed to have a permit to keep him as a pet, and he frequently was visited by Massachusetts Environmental Police officials, family members said, to make sure the paperwork was up to date.

Taz also had all of his shots, family members said.

But, given the high level of germs often found in a dog's mouth, hospital officials decided not to reattach the tip of Michael Stone's pinky. The dog was taken to Tufts Medical Center for further tests. Results weren't available yesterday.

Northborough police declined to comment on the incident.

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