



Neighbors, police come to rescue after dog attacks dog

By Bruno Matarazzo Jr. , Staff writer
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SALEM - A German shorthaired pointer scaled a fence and locked onto the neck of a neighbor's dog being walked by its owner on Irving Street yesterday afternoon.

Neighbors in the North Salem neighborhood heard Chanelle Camire screaming, and many ran out into the street armed with buckets of water and baseball bats, she said. The other dog "would not let go - slamming him off the (ground) like he was a rag doll," Camire said last night. "I got so scared. I was running down my street screaming, pleading for someone to come and help me."

While one neighbor was trying to pry the dog's mouth open, Camire said, Patrolman Michael Levesque, who lives across the street, grabbed his nightstick and stuck it down the dog's throat to unlock its grip.

Levesque then scooped up the injured Butta, a 6-year-old bichon frise-spaniel mix, put him into his cruiser and raced to the animal hospital two miles away for emergency care.

Camire said she later encountered the owner of the attacking dog in the lobby of the animal hospital. The owner decided to have the pointer euthanized.

Camire, 25, said she called 911, but all she could do when the police dispatcher picked up the phone was scream and cry.

"This dog is like my baby," said Camire, who's owned Butta since he was a puppy. "It was the scariest thing ever - watching something you love being beaten and there's nothing you can do."

A neighbor eventually brought Camire to the hospital, where she waited in the lobby sobbing. She said a man asked her what happened and she told him, "My dog was just attacked."

"Your dog got attacked?" the man reportedly asked. "That was my dog. He was put down."

The man was Jeffrey Kasprzyk, 32, who owned the German shorthaired pointer, according to police. Camire said she told Kasprzyk that she was sorry.

Butta, who weighs 22 pounds and has white, fluffy hair, is recuperating at New England Veterinary Clinic on Highland Avenue. Camire said she will find out today if the dog needs surgery. Doctors told her the attacking dog missed Butta's major arteries, but Butta was hemorrhaging from his neck when he arrived at the animal hospital shortly after the 3 p.m. attack.

Camire said her dog was attacked a month and a half ago by the same dog as her stepmother was walking the animal. A report was not filed because the owner said he would tie up the dog, Camire said.

Kasprzyk could not be reached for comment last night.

Camire said she loves animals and sympathizes with Kasprzyk's loss but feels it was the right decision.

Don Famico, the city's animal control officer, said he hopes for a good recovery for Butta "and maybe some restitution so it doesn't have to become a civil issue."

Famico was in a meeting when the attack happened and credited the work of Levesque, whom he calls his "unofficial assistant."

He said there will be no criminal charges filed or hearings held because the owner willingly had his dog put down.

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