

Dog attacks neighbor

Animal shot, killed; police investigating

By Wes Woods II, Staff Writer
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CLAREMONT - A police report and a dog's owner disagree about the circumstances in which a dog attacked an 80-year-old man Thursday, before a neighbor shot and killed the animal.

Neighbors on Virginia Avenue identified the victim as Walt Kelly.

Claremont police Lt. Paul Davenport said Friday he believed Kelly was released from the hospital late Thursday night.

Police responded to a call of a dog reported shot while attacking a person in the 300 block of Virginia Avenue in Claremont about 6 p.m., according to a police news release.

Police said their preliminary information showed the dog got loose and attacked an 80-year-old neighbor in his yard.

The man received wounds to the chest and side. An ambulance transported him to Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.

A neighbor of Kelly, police said, watched the attack and ran from his home to help the man.

The neighbor shot the dog once, which caused the animal to stop attacking and run away.

Dog owner Robin Lifland disagreed with the police's version of what happened.

She said Kelly waved at her when she went to get her mail and her 62-pound shepherd mix named Timmy "got spooked" and left the house and started to bark at him.

"I said 'Walt, stand still.'" Instead, Kelly started to wave his arms and Timmy bit him and ripped his shirt but did not break the skin, Lifland said.

Davenport disagreed about the breaking of the skin and said the dog did cause a puncture wound.

"I yelled for my daughter to call 911," Lifland said Friday morning.

She was then able to calm Timmy and got him to lie in a "down stance" on the street. Her daughter gave Kelly an ice pack after he walked back home, she said.

Then the neighbor came from behind without warning and shot Timmy, Lifland said.

"The dog was under control," she said. She believes the neighbor with a gun told the police a different story.

Police confiscated the neighbor's firearm pending the investigation, he said.

"If no charges are filed, it will be returned," Davenport said.

Police are investigating both versions of the story.

Lifland took Timmy to a local veterinarian, but he died on the way.

Police said the veterinarian and the Inland Valley Humane Society would examine the dog for rabies.

Karen Ehnert, senior veterinarian for Los Angeles County public health and rabies-control program, said the dog will be tested Monday.

"The dog was on rabies immunization," Ehnert said. "The rabies risk is not significant," she added. The law requires any animal that bites a person to be tested for rabies, she said.

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