

Fort Yukon toddler killed by dog**2-YEAR-OLD: Boy wandered into neighbor's yard while the chained husky mix was eating.**By JAMES HALPIN
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A toddler was killed in Fort Yukon this week when he wandered into a neighbor's yard and was attacked by a chained dog, according to village police.

The boy, identified by his grandmother as Abraham Jonathan Tackett, was pronounced dead on arrival at the village clinic following the Monday afternoon attack, police officer Chris Inderrieden said.

Abraham would have been 2 years old on May 19, said his grandmother, Mary Beth Solomon, who said the boy got his middle name from his great-grandfather, Jonathan Solomon, a prominent Fort Yukon orator and traditional Gwich'in chief.

"I don't think he realized the danger," she said. "He was a real friendly kid. ... He was always playing with dogs; he wasn't afraid of dogs. He was just at the wrong place."

The attack took place about 3 p.m., when the boy and his father were preparing to run some errands on a four-wheeler, Inderrieden said. They stepped outside into the front yard, and the father put the child down while he ran back inside for a moment, he said.

The boy wandered into a neighbor's back yard about 50 yards away, where there were a number of dogs -- all chained -- that had recently been fed and were still eating, Inderrieden said. The child approached a 3-year-old husky mixed breed and the dog attacked, apparently protecting its food, he said.

The father, Clayton Tackett, 33, came back outside and began looking for his son, thinking he might have gone to Solomon's residence next door on the opposite side from where the dogs were, Solomon said. A neighbor girl pointed him in the direction of the dogs, Solomon said.

He ran into the backyard and found the dog on top of the boy, continuing its attack, Inderrieden said. The man tore the dog off and took his son to the Yukon Flats Health Center, where he was pronounced dead, he said.

Abraham's body has been flown to Anchorage for an autopsy, Inderrieden said.

"As of right now, we're calling it an accidental death," he said. "The community is pretty shocked."

The fatal attack is the second in the last dozen years in Fort Yukon, a village of about 600 that sits along the Yukon River some 145 miles northeast of Fairbanks. In 1996, a 4-year-old boy was killed by a previously nonviolent malamute-husky mix in a sled dog lot behind the village store, according to news reports at the time.

This dog also had no history of aggressive behavior, but police shot it Monday night in the interest of public safety, Inderrieden said.

"He was actually a pretty friendly dog," he said. "I think the kid just happened to walk up on it at the wrong time."

The family doesn't blame the dog's owners, Solomon said. She said she didn't know the people well, but they always kept their dogs chained and there hadn't been any problems with them in the past.

"It was an accident," Solomon said. "There's nothing they could have done about it. We just pray for the Lord to get us through this."

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