

Deception launched West Bend search for girl-biting dog

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[E-MAIL](#)

Years ago, when I lived down in the Chicago area because I didn't know any better, I was out jogging when a big dog came bounding across a yard, failed to stop the way they usually do, and sank his fangs into my lower thigh.

Here, in order, is what I remember thinking:

That hurts.

That is a vicious dog, and I hope that dog doesn't bite me again when I try to get myself up off this sidewalk because it looks like it really wants to.

I wonder if that dog has had its rabies shots because I am bleeding.

I don't like that dog.

I do not, I should clarify, dislike all dogs.

I have a dog named Fielder, and I sometimes even tell him that I like him very much. But I do not like him nearly as much as my children or other adults or even police officers because dogs are not human

beings.

Some people seem confused about this, including a few up in West Bend.

In West Bend last Sunday, police sent out a press release to all sorts of newspapers and radio stations. They asked for help locating a dark-colored, mid-sized dog, possibly a shepherd mix, that had bitten a 3-year-old girl in Riverside Park Saturday morning.

"The girl suffered only minor injuries," the police said, "however may have to undergo extensive medical treatment if the dog cannot be located (in order) to rule out the possibility of rabies"

According to West Bend Sgt. Duane Farrand, the information about the bite came from the girl's 45-year-old mother.

Police have no reason to disbelieve a 45-year-old mother.

And people in West Bend who started keeping their eyes open for a vicious dog have no reason to disbelieve police.

So we bit on it. All of us.

In fact, the only one who didn't bite, it turns out, was the mid-sized, dark-colored shepherd mix.

Because, police now say, there isn't one — and never was.

Farrand told me Friday that the mother eventually admitted making the whole thing up.

Initially, I suspected this was one of those people with that weird mental disease known as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, where parents harm children in order to get attention.

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Nope. Farrand says that the little girl really was bitten by a dog, but not at the park. According to Farrand, the girl was chomped on by her baby sitter's dog, a lab mix. And, it seems, it was a big chomp, at least a big enough one to leave "puncture wounds" and necessitate bringing the girl to a clinic.

The clinic reported the bite to authorities, as it is supposed to.

And the mother, according to Farrand, lied because "she was afraid that the baby sitter was going to get in trouble and the dog was going to be put down."

Police, in the meantime, started canvassing neighborhoods and taking calls.

"Every shift," he said, "was looking for the dog from the 27th until the 30th." That's four days when they could have been doing other things. Including making sure everything was OK with the little girl.

I don't know the mother's side because, although police plan to recommend obstruction charges, that hasn't happened yet and so the reports are not public. Nor is her name.

What I do know is that it hurts to get bit by a dog and raises all sorts of worries and concerns.

About the human, especially a child.

Not about the dog.

You'd think.

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