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## Dog Bite Sends Johnson City Girl To Hospital



Jonathan Webb/WJHL

Gilligan sits inside a cage at the Washington County-Johnson City Animal Shelter

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By [NATE MORABITO](#)

Reporter / WJHL

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A German Shepherd/Great Dane mix remains quarantined today after biting a nine year-old girl. Washington County, Tennessee, deputies say doctors admitted the child to the hospital Wednesday after the dog attacked her Tuesday night. The dog lived at Denise Anders' home on the 200 block of Baxter Street in Johnson City.

"He's not a vicious dog," Anders said. "He's never done anything. There's nobody around here afraid of the dog."

Deputies say it is still unclear what provoked the dog to attack. The victim's mother told deputies her child was just bending down to pick up a toy when the dog bit her, but a witness told them a different story.

"The child was down here by herself, sitting on the dog, and had the chain wrapped around the dog's neck," Anders said. "If someone's got me down with a chain wrapped around my neck, I'm going to get

defensive.”

Although the girl’s injuries were not life-threatening, doctors recommended surgery, Washington County Deputy Lt. Gary Wiseman said. He met the victim at the hospital. The dog gave her four or five puncture wounds, he said. They included injuries to her ear, face, and neck, Wiseman said.

“It could have been much worse,” Wiseman said. “There could have been a lot of tearing and disfigurement.”

The dog was chained at the time, leading Wiseman to believe the dog felt threatened.

“If you’re outside the circle, you’re probably alright,” Wiseman said. “If you’re inside the circle and he gets mad, you may not be alright.”

For the next week-and-a-half, the dog, named Gilligan, will call the Washington County-Johnson City Animal Shelter home. Animal control will monitor the dog for 10 days to make sure he doesn’t have rabies. Animal control says so far, the dog does not appear to have rabies.

Although the dog’s owner is not facing any criminal charges, animal control cited Denise Anders after learning the dog was overdue for his rabies vaccination. Anders says that is all a misunderstanding. She claims the dog is vaccinated.

## **Reader Reactions**

Posted by ( Mrs.R ) on July 03, 2008 at 11:50 pm

I was horrified to see this story on the news, not only for the little girl, but for the family that owns the dog. People are usually very quick to judge a breed by one bad act.

What scares me most is I have a Great Dane, and he is a complete sweetheart, a baby, a pushover, as this owner said about her dog ““He’s not a vicious dog,”. “He’s never done anything. There’s nobody around here afraid of the dog.” “. However I am SO very afraid that now people will call for the banning and destroying of Danes (and German Shepards) because this dog was defending itself against someone who had it down with it’s chain wrapped around it’s neck.

I had a woman once tell me that she was attacked by a Dane when she was a child. I asked her, “What’d you do to it” because 99.999% of Danes (and dogs in general), when they are treated well, do not attack unless they are confronted in a threatening manner. Something has to make the dog afraid that either they, or someone they love them will be hurt.

I am begging people, PLEASE, do not judge a breed by one act. Watch the dog in question, and watch the owners because usually how the owners act is how the dog (ANY breed) will act. And remember, no matter the size of a dog you NEVER approach or touch the dog without letting your presence be known and ASK THE OWNER. If they say “NO”, they usually have a very valid reason! As an owner I (generally) like for people to pet my dog and to pay attention to him, it’s good for him to know that people are not bad, and it’s good for people to see that a big dog is not violent.