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## Motorist saves mail carrier from canine attack

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/865634,pitbull.article>)

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HIGHLAND -- Mail carrier Danielle Lawrence tries not to think about what might have happened if a passing motorist had not stopped to rescue her from a vicious dog attack.

"I'm so lucky," the 28-year-old said. "If she hadn't come, I would have been tore up worse than I was."

Joan Michniewicz, 77, was backing out of her driveway in the 3500 block of Wicker Avenue on Monday afternoon when she heard Lawrence scream and then saw the large mixed-breed dog lunge and knock the terrified woman to the street.

Michniewicz backed out of her driveway and drove right at the dog, forcing the animal to back up. She then yelled for Lawrence to get into her car.

"It was a very frightening thing," Michniewicz, a retired construction office manager, said. "But I thought, 'I just have to help this poor girl.'"

Lawrence, a Griffith resident, was walking to a mailbox at a duplex about 2:42 p.m. when the dog pushed open a backyard gate and attacked her.

The postal worker, hired just seven weeks ago, used her mail bag and pepper spray to protect herself, as she was trained to do, but suffered multiple bite wounds nonetheless.

The attack left her with a 2-inch gash in her left leg, scratches and swelling on her right hand and a puncture wound on her bottom, Highland police said.

She was taken to the emergency room at Community Hospital in Munster and treated for her injuries.

"I don't want to say I'm traumatized. But I am upset," Lawrence said. "When I see a dog now, I get upset and fearful."

The post office has since assigned her to a motor route because she cannot walk a route.

Dog owner Sandra Kulchawick was ticketed by police for allowing her pet to run loose. Kulchawick told police the latch on her gate was broken so she placed a large flower pot in front of it to keep it from opening.

"It was a very vicious dog. And putting a flower pot in front of the gate instead of fixing the latch was very irresponsible," Lawrence said.

Police Cmdr. George Georgeff said the dog had all its required vaccinations. But on Thursday, Lawrence was still waiting for confirmation of that from Highland's animal warden.

Seven months ago, another Highland mail carrier was hospitalized after he was attacked by a police dog.

Mitchell Najar of Griffith was delivering mail in the 3700 block of Highway Avenue when the unleashed canine charged him as his handler, Highland police officer John Hinkel, cleaned the dog's cage.

The dog, a 2-year-old Belgian Malinois, was later returned to its Michigan training center, Georgeff said.

The department does not currently have a canine unit.

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