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Cops: Man provoked dog bites

By Danielle Ameden/Daily News staff

GHS

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MILFORD — A Harris Avenue man was arrested Friday for disobeying police commands after a neighbor's large mixed-breed dog bit him and another person to protect its owner, police said. The dog is now under quarantine.

Joseph J. Thompson, 32, was arraigned in Milford District Court yesterday on charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest, related to the incident. He was released on personal recognizance.

Thompson created a dangerous situation, police said, as emergency crews responded to a reported dog bite on Penny Lane at Harris Avenue. He and two other people ended up going to the hospital.

Police say Margaret Care was walking her dog about 4:20 p.m. Friday when it started running and jerked the leash. Care was caught off-guard and ended up tripping and falling, injuring her hip, said Sgt. James Heron.

A female neighbor tried to help Care, who was lying in the street, and the dog protectively nipped the woman's arm, Heron said.

Officers responded to calls about that bite, and arrived to find the dog standing over Care, growling as people got close to her, Heron said.

A crowd of neighbors gathered as Milford Police, a state police trooper, firefighters and paramedics tried to help the two injured women and deal with the dog.

"It was clear that everybody just (needed) to calm down and stand back," Heron said.

Police say Thompson, of 6 Harris Ave., physically interfered and tried to take the dog away from Care, who was still clutching the short leash.

Thompson first came out of his home carrying a beer can, and then came out a second time with a dog leash, Heron said. Thompson was told by police they didn't need the leash, and he then sat on the ground and moved to get close to the animal, according to Officer Michael Mastroianni's report.

"He created a reckless and hazardous condition for himself and everybody else there," the sergeant said.

Police ordered him to stay back, and he cursed at them, Heron said.

"Thompson ignored officers, and then stuck his right arm directly in front of the dog's face. The dog bit Thompson several times," Mastroianni wrote.

"It was a very strange thing that he did - almost like he purposely gave the dog his arm and the dog bit him," Heron said.

Thompson's arm bled heavily from cuts on his arm, Mastroianni wrote.

Thompson resisted as three officers struggled to take him into custody, refusing to stand up and be handcuffed, police said.

Heron said Thompson does not know Care or the dog well, but just saw the action on the street and "decided to interject himself for whatever reason."

Meanwhile, Heron said he fired several shots from a .22 caliber net gun to try to capture the dog with a net. The technique didn't work, but an animal control officer arrived and put a noose on the pet, he said.

The dog was taken into the animal control department's custody for a 14-day period of quarantine, which is standard procedure in these cases, Heron said.

Heron described the dog as the size of a large Labrador retriever, and not vicious or a threat to others.

"It was a freak accident, and basically a dog just protecting his owner," Heron said.

Care, who is a Milford Police and Fire dispatcher, was taken by ambulance to Milford Regional Medical Center after her tumble, police said.

She is scheduled to have surgery for a broken hip and will be out of work for eight to 10 weeks, Heron said.

The woman who had tried to help Care went to the hospital by herself, and was treated and released, police said.

Police brought Thompson to the hospital for treatment of his dog bites, and then to the station to be booked, Heron said.

He is due back in court Jan. 8 for a pretrial conference.

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