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Man not allowed to visit dog accused of attack

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ROCHESTER HILLS -- A judge refused Monday to let a dog owner visit his 120-pound Akita, impounded after police said it attacked the owner's grandfather and ripped off the elderly man's ear.

"I am not going to set up a visitation of the defendant and his pet," said Rochester Hills 52-3 District Court Judge Lisa Asadoorian.

In the audience was retired physician Dr. Willard House, 89, of Rochester Hills, in a wheelchair and with one ear covered by a surgical muff. Police said the Akita attacked him Dec. 27 in his home, where he lives with his grandson Marquell Powe, 32, the dog's owner.

Powe is charged with harboring a dangerous animal, which carries a maximum charge of 90 days in jail and maximum fine of $500, court officials said. Powe was given a $1,000 personal bond Monday, then after declining an interview drove off with his grandfather.

According to an Oakland County Sheriff's Office report, House and other family members told police that while Powe was out of town, the dog bit House on his arms, legs, posterior and right ear and stood over the prostrate victim as he lay on his kitchen floor until House's daughter ran to his assistance and pulled the dog off him.

The report also says that Rochester Hills firefighters "retrieved the severed part of Willard's ear and placed it into a plastic bag with water so Willard was able to take it to the hospital with him."

Yet, the victim doesn't want the dog destroyed, attorney Jeffrey Quas told the judge.

Quas is defending Powe from a charge of harboring a dangerous animal, which carries a maximum charge of 90 days in jail and a fine up to $500, officials at 52-3 District Court in Rochester Hills said Monday. Powe was given a $1,000 personal bond in Monday's hearing before he rolled his grandfather's wheelchair through the courthouse and drove off with him, declining to answer a reporter's questions.

Later Monday he did not return calls. But his lawyer said the dog should go back to the home.

"That dog has never bitten anyone," Quas said after the hearing, correcting himself to say "before this" when a reporter noted the Dec. 27 attack.

"The representation that it bit anyone six times before is false," he added, referring to statements police took from other family members. At the time of the incident, they told animal-control officers that the Akita named Dozer had bitten at least four other people, although "the incidents were not reported," according to a county report.

By Monday, however, the relatives had backed down from requests by authorities that they testify in the case, threatening the criminal case against Powe, said Oakland County Animal Control officials.

Oakland County Animal Control Manager Larry Obrecht said the dog is vicious and should be destroyed.

“That’s a nasty dog. When you walk up to its cage, it rolls back its lips and tries to bite you,” he said Monday.

“That dog does not belong back in the home with that old man,” Obrecht said.