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## Misery upon misery at mobile home park

### Loose K-9 leaves woman with several bite marks

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Two days after Vicki White was attacked by a police dog, her right hip still is dark purple with wounds resembling bullet holes.

To make matters worse, the Heritage Oaks mobile home park resident still doesn't have running water to keep her wounds clean.

Water service at the Gulf Beach Highway park was disconnected nine days ago because management failed to pay its bill.

She hurts. She can't go to work. She can barely afford antibiotics.

White, 53, had just stepped outside her mobile home Monday when she was bitten repeatedly by "K-9 Bob," who is handled by Escambia County Deputy John Watkins.

"All I can remember is holding the dog's head and screaming and screaming and screaming," White said.

Emergency Medical Services personnel and deputies had been called to White's trailer because her son had a seizure. Deputies, including a K-9 unit, were called in because White's son was being "combative" with EMS staff, a report said.

White said she can't understand how the dog was able to get out of the deputy's car.

"They're saying someone opened the door," said White, 53. "So anyone can just go let the dog out? What if it had been a child?"

Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan did not respond to phone calls Wednesday. Spokesman Sgt. Ted Roy said the sheriff had referred inquiries to him.

On Tuesday, Roy said it was possible that the car door was opened accidentally by the emergency release controller kept on the officer.

But on Wednesday, Roy said it was "highly unlikely" that scenario occurred. He said someone standing outside the mobile home opened the car door to release the dog.

## Disputed events

Some 20 to 30 people were in the area, however, and no one actually saw anyone open the door, according to a sheriff's report.

The report said a firefighter saw a man in a blue shirt standing near the car. When questioned later, the man denied opening the door.

White's neighbor, Carol Mason, 55, said she was watching from a few feet away when the dog was released from the car. She said no one opened the door.

"There isn't a person out here in this trailer park who would be stupid enough to let that K-9 out of that car," she said. "It was horrifying."

Vicki White said it seemed like several minutes before deputies came to her rescue. The sheriff's report says deputies grabbed the animal and commanded it to release the woman.

## Bad Monday

The incident started Monday afternoon when White's son, Zachary, 33, had a seizure.

Zachary White's wife, Selina, 25, called 911 for medical help. Roy said a sheriff's cruiser was flagged down by someone who said EMS workers needed help with a "combative" patient.

When the officer arrived, he called for backup from available deputies. Roy said at least three other officers arrived at the scene in addition to fire department and EMS officials.

Officers handcuffed Zachary White because he was kicking and pushing away officers, Roy said.

Zachary White was discharged from Baptist Hospital about 11 p.m. Monday. He doesn't remember what happened.

"He didn't even know who his wife and mama was," Selina White said. "They had him on his stomach hog-tied like he was a criminal."

His family said he was hostile because he was being harshly handled by officers as he was coming out of the seizure.

"You can break your bones," said Vicki White. "They're not supposed to handcuff a seizure patient. They should know that."

## K-9 policy review

Vicki White's dog attack comes less than two months after the Escambia County K-9 unit was restored from a three-week hiatus. It came under fire from the U.S. Department of Justice. The unit was criticized for poor documentation of incidents, the use of K-9s during misdemeanor arrests and crowd control, and excessive force by the dogs.

Roy said the dogs are trained to run to their handler as soon as the door is released. He said White was attacked because she stood in the way to the dog's handler.

"It didn't help that she was hysterical," Roy said.

White is upset that the Sheriff's Office has not called her since the incident.

"They know they screwed up," she said. "If you were innocent, wouldn't you want to make sure they were OK?"

Roy said the Sheriff's Office interviewed the woman for a statement while she was in the hospital being treated for the dog bite. He said the office has no set policy regarding following up with people bitten by its dogs.

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