



Woman sues neighbor over attack by 3 dogs

GREG TUTTLE Of The Gazette Staff | Posted: Wednesday, October 14, 2009 3:35 pm

A Billings woman who was attacked by three dogs in July filed a District Court lawsuit Wednesday against the next-door neighbors who own the dogs.

Laurah Peron's suit alleges that her neighbors, Ricardo Cortez and Leon Garcia, were negligent when their three boxers attacked her in her yard. The complaint seeks unspecified damages for medical costs, lost income, general damages for pain, suffering and physical disfigurement. The lawsuit also alleges Peron suffered property damages when the boxers attacked her sheltie, and it seeks punitive damages for "actual malice."

Peron was bitten numerous times and underwent treatment for rabies because there was no proof that the dogs had been vaccinated, states the lawsuit, filed by Billings attorney Solomon Neuhardt.

Peron told The Billings Gazette shortly after the incident that on the evening of July 6 she was preparing to spray her front stoop for bugs at her home on Laurie Lane when the three dogs attacked her from behind. Two dogs grabbed her left leg and the third dog bit her right hand, she said.

"All of the sudden they were just on me," she said. "I was screaming at the top of my lungs."

A neighbor who heard Peron's screams came to her aid and helped her into her garage. The boxers then attacked one of Peron's two shelties, which survived after veterinary treatment.

Garcia was issued nine tickets by an animal control officer, and the boxers were quarantined for 10 days. Garcia later pleaded guilty to six charges in Billings Municipal Court, including three counts of having a potentially dangerous dog and three counts for having a dog at large. He was ordered to pay \$430 in fines.

Garcia and Cortez "willfully and wantonly and intentionally disregarded their duty as owners" of the dogs that attacked Peron, according to the lawsuit.