



Star-Bulletin

Monday, October 06, 2008

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Pit bull attack kills isle infant

STORY SUMMARY | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

A 2-month-old baby died early yesterday in an apparent attack by the family's pit bull mix in Waianae.

The dog, which neighbors described as aggressive, also attacked the infant boy's mother in the family home on Kakaiapola Street. She was reported in stable condition.

The Hawaiian Humane Society took the dog into custody later yesterday morning.

The medical examiner identified the boy as Iokepa Liptak. His family had no comment yesterday.

Neighbor Robert Vidinha said the dog, named Penelope Rose, normally was kept in a backyard kennel but had been running free in the yard over the last month.

By Laurie Au



Mike Burley / mburley@starbulletin.com
From his back yard, Robert Vidinha pointed to his neighbor's yard where an infant boy was killed by a dog yesterday in Waianae. He pointed out where he built additional fencing to protect him from the dog.

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By Laurie Au

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 06, 2008

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Neighbors described the pit bull that killed a 2-month-old boy early yesterday as a loud and aggressive dog that remained locked up for most of the time in a kennel in the backyard of a Waianae home.

The Honolulu Medical Examiner's Office identified the infant as Iokepa Liptak. The office has not yet determined a cause of death, and an autopsy is scheduled for today.

The family refused to talk to reporters yesterday outside of their home on Kakaiapola Street in Waianae. Most of their neighbors also declined to talk as news spread that the family's dog had bitten and killed the boy shortly after midnight.

Keona Leslie and his wife live in a home behind the family and heard screaming.

"At first I thought it was a domestic fight," said Leslie, 44. "But it was a startled, surprised scream that went on for a while. Then we knew that something was wrong."

VIDEO: Humane Society Holding Dog From Fate Bite Case



The dog is in isolation, it is not clear if she will eventually be euthanized.

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His wife called 911 after the couple heard women screaming continuously and rapid, agitated footsteps across a wooden floor.

Paramedics transported the baby to the hospital in critical condition along with his mother, 31, who also had some apparent dog bites, according to Bryan Chepic, spokesman for the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. The mother was in stable condition.

The baby was pronounced dead later yesterday morning. Paramedics returned to the home about 35 minutes after the initial response to treat another woman who had been attacked.

An officer from the Hawaiian Humane Society went to the home at about 4:30 a.m. to take the dog into custody, said spokeswoman Kawehi Yim. Neighbors described the black female dog as a pit bull mix.

A police officer was watching over the dog, but no one was there to claim ownership, Yim said. The dog will be held at the Hawaiian Humane Society until police and Humane Society officials decide what to do next. The police classified the case as an unattended death.

Robert Vidinha has lived behind the family's home for 32 years. Four years ago he built a 4-foot-high iron fence because the dog, named Penelope Rose, would bark violently at his young grandchildren.

"My grandchildren couldn't go into the back yard because I thought that dog was dangerous," said Vidinha, 68.

Vidinha said three other dogs lived at that home, but only Penelope Rose had a mean spirit. She normally stayed in a kennel about 15 feet in length in the back yard but had been running free in the yard over the last month, he said.

Yim, of the Humane Society, said attacks of this nature give dogs -- particularly pit bulls -- a negative stereotype, but noted that fatal dog attacks are rare.

"Our hearts go out to the family," Yim said. "This is probably one of the few times when a dog attack has actually resulted in a death. We have over 200,000 owned dogs on the island of Oahu. Last year we responded to about 240 dog bite reports and potentially dangerous-dog cases. When you look at that, it's less than 1 percent."

In February 2004 a neighbor's dog killed a 17-month old boy on Kauai.

VIDEO: Baby Killed By Family Dog



A 2 month old boy was taken to a hospital, where he died. His mother was also injured. [Watch]



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