

Kevin Michael Lahey - 3 Years Old

Townsend, Vermont
Mauled to death by wolf hybrid

Boston Herald (MA)

December 11, 1993

Wolf-dog protecting puppies kills Vt. boy, 3

A 3-year-old Vermont toddler who wandered out of the yard of his day-care center yesterday was mauled to death by a neighbor's wolf-dog, which was apparently protecting her litter of newborn puppies. The 120-pound, 2 1/2-year-old female wolf-dog sprang over the makeshift pen where she was confined with her nine puppies about 9:50 a.m., police said. "The dog just hurdled the fence," said one resident of Townshend, which is about 50 miles...

New Hampshire Union Leader (Manchester, NH)

December 11, 1993

Wolf-Dog Escapes From Pen, Kills Boy

TOWNSHEND, Vt. (AP) - A 3-year-old boy died yesterday after he wandered into a yard next to his day care center and was attacked by a wolf-dog hybrid, police said. Authorities said the 120-pound, 2 1/2-year-old female animal was caring for a litter of nine puppies. That may have been a factor in its, they said. There is no fence between the day care center, which is in a private home, and the yard where the wolf-dog was kept. 'She was in a makeshift pen...

Rocky Mountain News (CO)

December 11, 1993

Wolf-Dog Kills 3-Year-Old Boy Next Door To Day-Care Center

A wolf-dog mauled a 3-year-old boy to death Friday after the youngster wandered away from his day-care center, authorities said. Kevin Michael Lahey wandered into a yard next to the center in Townshend about 9:50 a.m., where the 2 1/2-year-old female wolf-dog was caring for a litter of nine puppies. The 120-pound animal may have been protecting her puppies after Lahey walked over to look at them, said Cathy Barrows, an animal-control officer from Brattleboro...

Albuquerque Journal

Saturday, December 11, 1993

'Wolf-Dog' Attacks, Kills Boy, 3

Animal control officers in Townshend, Vt., on Friday, use snare poles to grab a "wolf-dog" that had attacked and killed a 3-year-old boy. The dog's owner, Ozzle Clark, watches. The boy had wandered into Clark's yard from a day-care center next door. By Wilson Ring said Cathy Barrows, an animal control officer from Brattleboro who took the wolf-hybrid away after the attack. "She probably chased the boy and knocked him down from the back. From there she ended up fatally wounding him," Barrows said. Barrows estimated the animal was three-quarters wolf and one-quarter dog. "It was extremely aggressive," she said. There was no fence between the day-

care center, which was in a private home, and the yard where the animal was kept. "She was in a makeshift pen made out of wooden pallets. Apparently she ended up getting out," Barrows said. The wolf-dog and her 10-day-old puppies were killed after the attack, Barrows said. The animal Will be tested for rabies. Both the owner of the day-care center, Sheila Brown, and the owner of the animal, Ozsde Clark, declined to comment...

BFP-12/15/93

Baby sitter grieves over child's death

By Andrea Zentz
Free Press Staff Writer

TOWNSHEND — Sheila Brown was crying when she answered the telephone Tuesday. Brown, a day care provider, was grieving over the death of 3-year-old Kevin Lahey, whom she had babysat since he was 4 months old.

"The little boy was like my own," she said.

She worries people blame her for Kevin's death, thinking that she should have prevented an alleged wolf-dog hybrid's fatal attack Friday.

But Brown discounted reports that Kevin left her yard and wandered next door to where the dog and her puppies were kept. Kevin and another boy, David, were playing on the tire swings.

"They hadn't been out for that long," she said. "I had just looked out the window. I have a 15-month-old baby (in her care). I went over to get diapers for changing. The phone rang. It was my mother. David came to the door."

She said the dog grabbed Kevin and dragged him. She ran after them and kicked the dog off the boy. Authorities killed the animal and its puppies.

Ozzie Clark owned the dog. His mother, Darlene Clark, said Tuesday that she has been advised not to talk with the media. But she said the dog had

been confined in an 8-foot-high fence fashioned out of wooden pallets. "These dogs never ran loose," she said.

Darlene Clark said people don't understand how the tragedy makes her feel. She started crying, saying the boy, the animal and the puppies are dead.

Brown said she planned to meet with Kevin's mother, Debra Lahey, today. Brown also has cared for Kevin's two older brothers.

Social and Rehabilitation Services Department officials will investigate whether to take action against Brown this week. Commissioner William Young said he did not want to make any judgments in advance.

"It's important to get information with an unbiased eye," he said.

He said the home has been the site of several complaints since it was registered in June 1990. Citing safety concerns, licensers told Brown she needed to get a smoke detector, to make sure poisons under the sink were not accessible and to repair the toilet. She corrected the problems.

In May 1991, licensers advised her that she was wrong to allow two children, 8 and 10, to walk without supervision to a nearby store to return bottles. The children had their parents' permission, but state regulations forbid it.

Dangerous dogs

As a small-animal veterinarian, the tragedy of a child being mauled by a dog is always a worry and something I try to make owners of a potentially dangerous dog understand.

However, rarely is it only the dog's fault. Some points to consider:

No breed of dog is exempt from being potentially dangerous, especially with a litter to protect. However, certain breeds are considered more protective and more aggressive than others.

There should be proper confinement for the dog and the child — fenced-in yards to prevent car accidents, bites, etc.

When it comes to dangerous dogs, not just any one breed should be defined and be the concern. Anything with teeth and claws can bite and scratch in certain situations.

Any legislation should be well thought-out, and should educate and prevent as well as penalize. It should be broad enough to help protect the public from dangerous dogs.

Remember, animals are part of the fabric of our society. Proper concern for animals and people are a necessity; our concern for both should be reflected in our laws.

12-23-93

JON A. STOKES
South Burlington

Child's death

My heart goes out to the parents of the little boy killed by the dog. It's a very sad thing but why is a 3-year-old child wandering around in the yard of a

day care center without some one to watch him? No child should ever be left alone, especially outside. Also, why wasn't there a fence around the day care? Of course the dog protected her young and the dog had no way of knowing the child only wanted to

look at the puppies.

I think much of this terrible accident rests with the day care. When you send a child to day care or school you expect they will be cared for. I also am sorry for the owner of the dog.

BFP
12-22-93

NITA TOWNE
Richmond

State to probe mauling death

Legislators plan ban on wolf dogs

By Andrea Zentz

Free Press Staff Writer

TOWNSHEND — State officials will investigate whether to take action this week against a day care home where a boy was killed by an alleged wolf hybrid.

Kevin Lahey, 3, was killed Friday while playing outdoors at Sheila Brown's registered day care, authorities said. Lahey reportedly wandered into the yard next to the day care where the animal was tending to her 10-day-old puppies.

Coleman Baker, chief of the children's day care unit at the Social and Rehabilitation Services Department, said Monday that the state could revoke the registration of a day care operation if the provider failed to protect a child from conditions that threaten his or her health, safety and well-being.

"This includes protecting children from stoves, pools, poisons, asbestos, wells, known vicious animals, medications, dust or chips from lead paint, traffic and other hazards," he said.

"But in regard to this particular circumstance, representatives of the department have not yet met with Brown, nor have they observed the setting in which this tragic event occurred," Baker said.

Baker said that there has

Attacks

A recent article issued by the Wisconsin Agriculture Department said most wolf-dog hybrids, unless they are kept in an extremely controlled environment, eventually attack someone whom they judge to be vulnerable:

■ In the past five years, seven children have been killed by wolves or hybrids in the country, the article said.

■ Two children were killed in Michigan by wolf-type "pets." "Both of these animals had shown no previous malice but killed the children quickly and efficiently without warning," the article said.

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■ N.H. boy attacked, 12A

been no recommendation or decision to take any action. Baker said state officials held off meeting with Brown because the boy's funeral was held Monday. Attempts to reach Brown were unsuccessful.

Baker said regulations governing a registered day care home are less stringent than a licensed day care center, which usually operates out of a public building. Brown operated a registered day care home.

Under state regulations, a provider can keep an eye on children 3 and older from inside the house as long as the children are within eyesight and earshot. A fence is not necessary.

See MAULING, 12A

MAULING:

Continued from Page 1A

While the department investigates the matter, other state officials are scrambling to find ways to prevent another killing.

Gov. Howard B. Dean said he would support a statewide ban on wolf hybrids, if the Legislature approved one. "I don't see any reason why anybody should own a dog like that," he said.

State Rep. Ralph Baker, R-Randolph, said he introduced a bill in 1990 that would have set controls on dangerous animals. He blamed Dean, then lieutenant governor, for sending the bill to a Senate committee where it died.

Baker said Dean told his colleagues that he hoped that was the last time he would see the bill.

Dean responded, "I don't remember any such thing. I would support a bill like that."

House Fish and Wildlife Chairman David Deen, D-Westminster, said he will push legislation that would allow municipalities to ban kenneling

Charges considered

or breeding of wolf hybrids.

"A statewide ban does not seem to be appropriate at this point," Deen said.

Dr. Robert Johnson, the state public health veterinarian, agreed. "Banning it would drive it underground, make it illegal to treat or vaccinate these animals," he said. "We want to work with folks who have hybrids not against them. Education is very important."

The hybrids can be dangerous, said Johnson, who has been in contact with other states to see how they handle the animals.

But a Benson breeder disagrees. Joan Cunningham said she has been breeding hybrids since 1977 and never had one attack a child. She said the owners need to handle the animals carefully. "You never, never hit them," she said.

"You never put them in a box and ignore them. ... A dog will suffer many, many cases of misuse or neglect and take it. A wolf dog is less apt to."