



Bear teen bitten by Delaware State Police K-9 chasing armed bicyclist

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A Delaware State Police K-9 attacked a 15-year-old from Bear on Tuesday and sent him to the hospital during a chase with an armed suspect on a bike.

News of the incident first appeared on Facebook Tuesday night along with a photo of the wound the teenager sustained and video of state police responding after the attack.

The official statement from police said the dog's handler found the dog with the "juvenile's shirt in his mouth."

State police spokesman Sgt.

Richard Bratz released a statement about the incident nearly a full day after it happened.

On Wednesday morning, he told The News Journal he was unaware of the incident and did not provide a statement or any other information until about 7 p.m. despite multiple requests for comment.

The press statement focused on the pursuit of a "suspicious black male wearing a black t-shirt and blue jean shorts carrying a gun." That man never was caught or identified.

The man started pedaling away on a bike down the sidewalk south of Pulaski Highway when police spotted him, Bratz's release said. A K-9 trooper exited his marked vehicle and yelled multiple warnings, he said.

"State Police K-9 stop or I'll send the dog," Bratz's statement said the warnings included. There were no other pedestrians in the area when the K-9 was dispatched, he said.

Bratz said the man continued northeast up a dirt path that separates the BP gas station parking lot and the Buffalo Wild Wings parking lot. Bratz said the man kicked the dog that was chasing him in the head and kept pedaling.

But the dog pursued, Bratz said, and the man apparently pulled a gun from his pocket as if to shoot the K-9. Bratz's statement did not say if any shots ever were fired, but said at this point the dog got kicked again. The fleeing biker reached Thornhill Drive and continued northwest, Bratz said, then turned onto Strathaven Court. The dog stayed in pursuit.

"As the trooper ran towards the suspect's location he turned the corner and observed the K-9 with a 15-year-old juvenile's shirt in his mouth," Bratz said. "The trooper immediately yelled commands for the K-9 to release from the juvenile and gained control of the K-9."

The 15-year-old lives there and was outside playing, according to his attorney, Matthew Fogg. The teenager and his mother met with Fogg on Wednesday, and the attorney spoke to The News Journal in their place.

Fogg said the teen was outside playing Tuesday afternoon when he spotted a German shepherd walking on Strathaven Court. The dog did not seem to be in pursuit of anyone nor wearing any kind of markings that would indicate it was a police K-9, Fogg said.

There were no police officers in sight, Fogg said.

Fogg said the dog then attacked the teen unprovoked. A police officer then appeared and pulled the dog off the teen, ending the attack, Fogg said.

Fogg said he's requesting the police report from the incident but has not yet received it or spoken to police. The attorney said the teen's mother has received calls from state police, but she didn't answer them and now is referring all questions to Fogg.

"It is our position a dog that is trained to attack people should be under the reasonable control of a police officer at all times," Fogg said. "It appears something went wrong here."

Bratz said the trooper called for EMS to respond. The teenager was taken to Christiana Hospital and later released.

"This is an unfortunate incident and we are concerned for the teenager and his family," Bratz said.

Contact Adam Duvernay at aduvernay@delawareonline.com or (302) 324-2785.

State police spokesman Sgt. Richard Bratz said the man in this photograph was the one a police K-9 was chasing before he turned his teeth on a 15-year-old boy unaffiliated with the original police pursuit. The man has not been identified or captured.

DELAWARE STATE POLICE



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