



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: UPDATE: Elderly Woman Airlifted After Dog Attack

Date: May 28, 2019

UPDATE

A Brooksville woman attacked early Monday morning by three pit bulls remains hospitalized at a local trauma center.

The woman, who is not being identified at this time, sustained non-life-threatening injuries in the attack on Church Road.

The owner of the dogs, Ralph Hughes B/M DOB/12-03-63, was cited as follows:

- Public Nuisance Animal – Second Offense (3 counts) -- \$900
- Unrestrained Animal (3 counts) -- \$1,200.

On 01-30-19 Hughes was previously cited for Unvaccinated Dog, Unlicensed Animal and Public Nuisance Animal for the same three dogs after they displayed aggression toward a citizen. Hughes was fined \$1,500 at that time.

All three dogs remain housed at the Hernando County Animal Services facility in Brooksville.

Original Information

On 05-27-19 just after 7:30 a.m., a call was received in the Emergency Communications Center regarding an elderly female who had just been attacked by three dogs.

Operators immediately dispatched Hernando County Fire Rescue (HCFR), a patrol deputy, and an animal enforcement officer to the scene.

The caller had placed the victim in a black pickup truck and was waiting alongside Spring Lake Highway for first responders to arrive. As they waited, the caller performed basic first aid on the victim's wounds. The victim was suffering from severe dog bites to both of her legs.

The caller told operators that the three dogs that attacked the victim, described as pit-bulls, were still running loose in the area.

Due to the severity of the injuries, the victim was treated on scene by HCFR and then airlifted to a trauma center for advanced care.

Investigation revealed the elderly female was out walking on Spring Lake Highway, something she normally does, when the dogs attacked her. The person who called saw that something was wrong and stopped to provide assistance.

When deputies and animal enforcement officers arrived and attempted to collect the dogs, one or more of the dogs attempted to attack the deputies/animal enforcement officers. Bean bag rounds were utilized to subdue the dogs. The dogs were then collected and taken to Hernando County Animal Services.

The owner of the dogs has been identified as Ralph Hughes of Church Road in Brooksville. Hughes was cited as follows:

- Public Nuisance Animal – Second Offense (3 counts)
- Unrestrained Animal (3 counts).

Mr. Hughes has surrendered all three dogs for euthanasia, as he believes they are too aggressive. He does not want them back. It should be noted, all three dogs are licensed and current on all shots.

The victim is listed in stable condition.

There is no additional information available at this time.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.

