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Pet death shows dog park danger

Rottweiler attacked, killed dachshund at Centennial

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Grr the brown dachshund was just getting used to being around other canines at dog parks.

PHOTOS:



A photo showing Spencer and Sarah Schluter and their dog, Grr.

He stopped soiling the ground whenever he was approached by a dog and wasn't afraid to sniff another mutt.

Grr became that scared little dog again on July 2 when a hulking Rottweiler cornered and attacked him in a central Bakersfield dog park.

Despite getting kicked and punched in his face, the growling Rottweiler only stopped after it fatally punctured Grr's throat.

The dachshund would die about 31/2 hours later, according to Animal Emergency and Urgent Care.

"To some people dogs are just animals, but to us he was a child," said Grr's owner, Spencer Schluter.

"Grr was just starting to come out of his shell."

Taking a dog to any of Bakersfield's four dog parks can be a risk because you never know what kind of dogs you will encounter, said Kern County Animal Control Chief Denise Haynes.

"It's tough because everybody should have a place to exercise their dog," Haynes said. "Each individual dog owner must not only think about the risks of other dogs, but also their own."

Spencer and his wife, Sarah Schluter, went to the Centennial Dog Park at 400 Montclair St. that nice, warm evening to let Grr and his Chihuahua buddy, Furio, get some exercise.

"We've been visiting this park for the past two weeks and all the other dogs have been very friendly," Spencer Schluter said. "We were thinking if a dog attacked, we could just scoop up Grr and Furio."

The couple were walking in the park when an unleashed Rottweiler scrambled from 10 feet away to chase down Grr, Schluter said.

The owner was in the middle of the park playing soccer, according to the couple.

The Rottweiler cornered Grr against a fence and bit the dachshund several times, Schluter said.

Schluter, who used to practice martial arts, punched and kicked the Rottweiler without getting him

to stop. The estimated 150-pound dog didn't stop until it was done.

Schluter took off his shirt and wrapped it around Grr's neck as blood dripped over the owner's chest and legs.

He cried, "help me, help me," as they carried Grr to their car and hurried to an animal hospital. Schluter gave Grr mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Air bubbled out of holes in Grr's throat.

"Please don't leave us, Grr. Please stay with us," the couple told the dog as they sped past red lights.

Grr stopped crying after driving through several blocks as his tongue hung outside his mouth.

The blood over Grr's face made his brown eyes look green.

Grr, the dog the couple called their NutraSweet baby because he was their substitute child, died when a hemorrhage formed in his neck, according to the veterinarian hospital.

"I pray he wasn't in pain," Spencer Schluter said. "Because of his neck injury, they couldn't give him an anesthetic."

He and his wife bought Grr after they were married in 2005.

"We planned to have him with us for most of our marriage," he said. "To see our children grow up, to be old and cranky with us, to never learn not to poop on the rug."

With all that happened that sad night, the couple didn't think about finding the Rottweiler owner.

Police searched the area and never found any suspects, said Lt. Mike Cantrell with the Bakersfield Police Department.

"I don't want to sue the owner," Schluter said. "I don't want to abuse Grr's memory by focusing on anger, but we feel people should be aware of the danger of certain breeds of dog so that incidents like this don't happen."

"If that had been one of the many children who play in that park, I don't want to think about the possible outcomes."