

Guilty Plea in Allentown Pit Bull Attack

Allentown Morning Call 3/28/2013

March 28, 2013|By Manuel Gamiz Jr., Of The Morning Call

A 37-year-old man pleaded guilty Thursday to charges in a pit bull attack that badly mauled his neighbor's small dog last month in Salisbury Township.

Montreal Howard, 37, had been charged with failure to confine his dog and harboring a dangerous animal in violation of the state Dog Law.

At the hearing Thursday, District Judge Michael Pochron ordered Howard to pay more than \$3,600 in restitution for his neighbor's dog's veterinarian bills. Besides restitution, Howard will also pay \$355 in fines and penalties.

In court, Howard apologized for what happened. He didn't comment after the hearing ended.

Howard's pit bull on Feb. 4 badly mauled a small cockapoo named Oreo, and bit the dog's owner, Tammie Jesperger, and Jesperger's father, Bill Tittel, in the 1400 block of Pearl Avenue before police arrived and shot the pit bull to death, police said.

Jesperger said her father had just taken Oreo for a walk when two pit bulls walked up, and one of them turned on Oreo. Tittel tried keeping the aggressive pit bull away and Jesperger ran outside to help him, she said outside the courtroom.

Jesperger said they wrestled with the pit bull for 40 minutes, and she used a plastic stake to pry open the pit bull's jaw and free Oreo. She said she ran toward the house, but the pit bull chased her.

She eventually got Oreo into the house safely. The 70-pound pit bull left Oreo with a broken jaw, ripped skin at his throat and numerous puncture wounds, police said.

Howard had no insurance for a dog attack. A bricklayer who was recently laid off, he agreed to a payment plan to pay the medical bills. Thomas Newell, the victim's attorney, said he will investigate whether the landlord's insurance company has any liability in the case.

Meanwhile, Oreo is recovering well. Tittel described the 6-year-old dog as a "tough little guy."

Jesperger said Oreo will have another surgery soon to remove the wires keeping his jaw together.

"He's eating OK," she said. "Soft foods only."

Jesperger and her father are doing well, and Oreo is getting better.

"He still has nightmares about that day," Tittel said. "He wakes up crying at night."

