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Mike Coonrod/KY3 NEWS

Puppy survives two nails driven into its skull

3/16/05

Police have a suspect for the abuser, who 'would have to be a monster.'

By: Dave Catanese and Tim Tialdo, KY3 News

The nails left the puppy blind in one eye and possibly deaf.

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SPRINGFIELD – A puppy is recovering from surgery after a man drove nails into its head with a hammer. When Humansville police brought the healer mix to Springfield on March 4, a veterinarian gave it only about a 50 percent chance of surviving.

A witness told police about seeing the abuse happen. A police investigation could lead to a criminal charge.

The dog is at a Castaway Animal Rescue Effort (C.A.R.E.) shelter on West Sunshine Street after



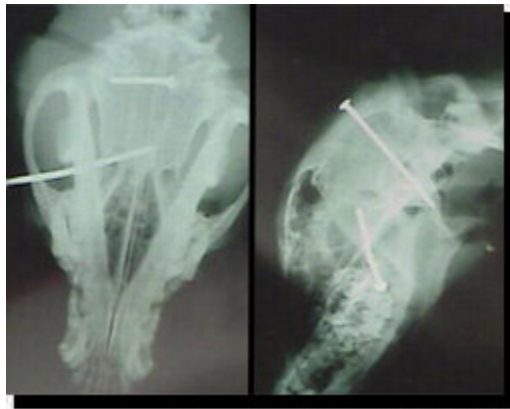
Mike Coonrod/KY3 NEWS

Melissa Sartin is amazed that the puppy survived.

having surgery at a veterinary clinic on South Glenstone Avenue. The vet says the puppy not only is going to make it but also has one of the best attitudes she's ever seen.

One nail was driven into the puppy's skull. Another was hammered into his cheekbone, leaving him blind in one eye and possibly deaf.

"In all my years of doing this, I was not prepared for that. I was in tears just looking at the pictures," said Melissa Sartin, director of C.A.R.E. "To think that somebody could do this!"



Castaway Animal Rescue Effort/KY3 NEWS

X-rays showed the nails in Trucker's skull.

"This is probably one of the worst cases of animal cruelty I've ever seen," said Dr. Robin Toner, an emergency veterinarian.

With his head bloody and his face swollen, Toner performed a risky surgery that saved the dog's life.

"I was worried," she said. "When I pulled the nail out, I didn't know what was going to happen. I didn't know if he was going to stop breathing. But he didn't. He just kept plugging along."

And he did so without ever growling or biting. Toner says it's incredible that he doesn't show any signs of holding a

grudge against people.

"He's been the best dog. I'm just amazed at his temperament. He should be afraid of us, fearful of people and he's not," said Toner.

The puppy doesn't shy away when people pet him. Because of all he's been through, they've named him Trucker.

"He just keeps on truckin'," said Sartin.

At the C.A.R.E. shelter, Trucker is learning to pick up on hand signals. His tail wags through it all.

The puppy faces another round of surgery next week to remove a tooth busted by one of the nails. After a

few more months of rehabilitation, C.A.R.E. will find him a loving home.

The staff also hopes the man responsible for the abuse is charged and tried.

“(He) would have to be a monster. There's no excuse for it,” said Sartin.

Humansville police said Wednesday afternoon that they have a suspect. The Polk County prosecuting attorney received an investigative report on Wednesday morning and will review it to see how he will proceed. The prosecutor plans to talk to the witness who saw the abuse. Police won't release any names or further details.

"Right now, it is an open case," said Humansville Police Chief Jim Hanak. "We have to wait until the prosecutor makes a decision on what's going to happen and until that time we are not at liberty to go into a lot of information."

"We are looking for identification of possible witnesses," said Prosecuting Attorney John Porter. "It's my understanding that the animal was treated by a veterinarian. We're looking for the vet report, phone numbers, things of that nature, so that we can contact him and confirm the nature of the injuries to the animal."

Any person interested in adopting Trucker can contact [C.A.R.E.](#) and fill out an application. It's a rather detailed application and the process includes an interview and two home visits. The telephone number is (417) 875-6565.

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