



Middlesex jury awards \$1.5 million in dog mauling case

By Brent Johnson/For The Star-Ledger

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NEW BRUNSWICK -- A Middlesex County jury decided the injuries a Lakewood woman suffered when attacked by a pit bull at her father's house are worth \$1.5 million.

Anne Krystopik sued her father after the dog he was watching bit her repeatedly at his Jackson home three years ago — an attack that left her with about 300 stitches, said her attorney, Norman Hobbie.

The jury ordered last Thursday that Norman Krystopik and Carmen Reino, the dog's owner, pay the victim \$1.5 million for her injuries.

Reino lived at the house, and Norman Krystopik looked after the dog when Reino was at work, Hobbie said. Reino was not at home at the time of the attack, Hobbie said.

"To be attacked by a dog is a serious, life-threatening event," said Hobbie, an Eatontown-based lawyer. "Anne is a young woman, and she has to live with the recollection and the scarring for the rest of her life."

Hobbie said Anne Krystopik, 30, was not available for comment. Attempts to reach her were unsuccessful.

In New Jersey, plaintiffs are not allowed to ask for a specific damage amount in a civil suit. The jury decides the payment.

Hobbie said he wasn't surprised by the size of the jury's amount.

"I thought it had seven-figure potential," he said.

Norman Krystopik, 65, declined comment.

"What's to say?" said David Dering, his Cedar Knolls-based attorney, who declined to discuss details of the case. "She didn't specifically ask for (\$1.5 million). The jury decides what to put on it. Such is life."

Though Jackson is in Ocean County, the case was tried in Middlesex County because Anne Krystopik previously lived in South Plainfield.

Norman Krystopik invited her to visit his home on Grawtown Road in March 2006, Hobbie said. When she arrived, the house was dark inside, and the pit bull attacked, Hobbie said.

Anne Krystopik suffered 17 bites or lacerations, Hobbie said.

"She actually feared the dog was going to kill her," Hobbie said.

The dog was euthanized after the attack, Hobbie said.

The suit claims neither Norman Krystopik nor Carmen Reino properly restrained the dog, which Hobbie said had a history of "aggressive behavior."

"The dog had certain propensities," Hobbie said. "The father should have taken more precaution to protect his daughter."

Anne Krystopik and her father reached an agreement before the verdict that capped Norman Krystopik's part of

the damages at \$300,000. Dering said Norman's insurance will cover that amount.

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November 13, 2009

Lakewood woman to get \$1.5M in pit bull attack

She sued her dad, another man

*By ZACH PATBERG
TOMS RIVER BUREAU*

It's now a money pit bull.

A jury on Thursday ordered two men to pay a Lakewood woman \$1.5 million for injuries suffered when their dog attacked her at their Jackson home, an attorney said.

Anne Krystopik received more than 300 stitches after a pit bull bit her arms and leg when she entered the house on Grawtown Road in March 2006, according to the complaint. Her father, Norman Krystopik, 65, was home but failed to supervise and restrain the dog, according to the complaint, which was filed in state Superior Court in Middlesex County, where the victim lived at the time.

Anne Krystopik sued her father and the dog's owner, Carmen Reino, 27, who was not home at the time. The jury verdict ordered her father to pay 60 percent of the \$1.5 million and Reino to pay 40 percent, Anne Krystopik's lawyer, Norman Hobbie, said.

However, during the trial, Anne and Norman Krystopik entered into an agreement, Hobbie said, that capped the damages at \$300,000, which he said Norman's insurance will cover.

Reino, who now lives in Englishtown, said he didn't know yet what his next step would be.

"I was told that they were going after the insurance company and it wasn't going to be personal," he said Friday. "So I didn't respond and now I got put into it somehow."

Krystopik's defense attorney, David Dering, did not return calls for comment.
