

The Virgin Islands Consortium

84-Year-Old Man Who Was Attacked By 5 Pit Bulls Is Still In Puerto Rico Under Intensive Care While Dogs' Owner Is At Large; Family Starts GoFundMe For Specialized Airlift To John Hopkins In Maryland

Crime / **Published On October 09, 2019 10:29 AM /**

Staff **October 09, 2019**



Editor's Note: The images used in this story are very graphic, and therefore viewer discretion is advised. The Consortium decided to use the images after the publication received permission from the victim's family -- including his son who has power of attorney -- to show the devastation wrought to an innocent man in his own yard, and by extension his family, while the owner of the dogs that perpetrated the attack is still at large.

ST. CROIX -- Gladstone Alexander Simon Sr., the 84-year-old man whose life took a turn for the worse [after he was viciously attacked by five pit bull dogs in his own yard](#) last month, is still in a Puerto Rico hospital under intensive care, the victim's son, Gladstone Alexander Simon Jr., told the Consortium during a phone interview Tuesday night.

"My dad is still in pretty bad shape. We are trying to get him moved to the United States so that he can have the professional assistance that's required. But the challenge that we're faced with is he can't travel on a regular commercial airline so he needs to be medically transported to the states. It's a pretty hefty expense to relocate someone that's in his condition. We did find a physician that would like to take the case at John Hopkins University in Maryland, but once again he has to be medically transported," Mr. Simon said.

The basic cost for the specialized transportation to John Hopkins is between \$35,000 to \$40,000, Mr. Simon said. The expense has led Mr. Simon and his siblings to create a GoFundMe account where anyone who wants to help can donate. Donate [here](#).



The victim was ravaged by the five pit bulls [on the night of Sept. 4](#). According to several individuals who witnessed the attack, some of whom were also attacked by the dogs previously in the Clifton Hill neighborhood, the man was in his yard when the dogs rushed him and started barbarously biting his flesh. As the attack was occurring, frightful and angry neighbors called for help. They called 911 seeking immediate reponse — doing so with a high level of frustration as they had reported the dogs numerous times before to police with little results.

According to the neighbors, the wild pit bull dogs, 7 in total, belonged to a neighbor at the entrance of the street. This neighbor, a man, had been urged many times to properly secure the dogs in his yard because of the animals' aggressive behavior toward the community, the neighbors said. The dogs have attacked virtually every family in the small neighborhood, according to multiple eyewitnesses.

Mr. Simon said the wounds on his father's right leg are still open. "The doctors are stating that they can't close the wounds up because of the bacteria from the dogs, so they have to keep it clean and there's a [hyperbaric] chamber utilized everyday to make sure that the leg is being cared for, and they said it is very important that they be very careful with the surgery portion of it because they don't want him to lose his leg," he said.



Following the incident, five of the 7 pit bulls were euthanized. Another was held by authorities, and at the last, a female, was left with the owner because it recently gave birth to puppies, according to Danny Rodriguez, lead detective for animal cruelty at the V.I.P.D.

Last night, V.I.P.D. Public Information Glen Dratte told the Consortium that the owner of the dogs was still at large, though he stressed that the suspect would eventually be arrested.

Mr. Simon said while he intends on eventually taking on the criminal matter, his current focus was on the medical care of his father. "I received a few phone calls from attorneys that would like to pursue the case, but I just don't have the time to address that right now. I want to make sure I focus on my dad's care. Right now I'm in the Virgin Islands trying to take care of his personal affairs. I also finally got power of attorney because I would like to take care of his financial needs -- making sure his bills continue to get paid," Mr. Simon said. "It's pretty tough for us right now."

The family gave the Consortium permission to use the photos of the victim showing the wounds of the gruesome attack. They show what appears to be the man's right foot disfigured with wounds and blood all over it; his chin showed a gaping wound and a deep gash under his lower lip.



Mr. Simon commended employees of the Juan F. Luis Hospital who he said worked to ensure his father survived the first critical hours following the attack. "I wanted to thank the Juan F. Luis Hospital because I know that initially, during the time of the injuries that my dad sustained, the first minutes and hours are critical and they did a very good job so I wanted to express my sincere thank you to the staff at the hospital."

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