



Senatobia Police Department

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Richard Chandler
Chief of Police

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Matt Defore
Asst. Chief

May 24, 2023

Chief Quaka,

To begin, my name is Richard Chandler. I am the Chief of Police for the Senatobia Police Department since January of 2020. Prior to that, I worked for the Southaven Police Department holding several different titles including K-9 Handler, Trainer, and Commander. I am a certified K-9 Instructor with the state of Mississippi and certifying official for several nationally recognized organizations. I am also a recognized expert witness regarding the use of police K-9s.

I have participated in the training of several Tupelo PD k-9 Teams over the last several years. I have also trained and certified several hundred K-9 teams throughout the last 15 years.

My knowledge of the incident:

I spoke with Corporal Tutor on Sunday May 21st regarding a K-9 Deployment with his partner Paco. Corporal Tutor advised me that he was on a hot track with his partner for a suspect and was led to a back yard that had a raised porch with decorative lattice around the bottom of it. Corporal Tutor advised that he believed his partner was in strong odor (Paco was spinning in a defined area around near the porch and then laid down) This is commonly referred to as a change in behavior by the K-9 and an indicator that a suspect or evidence may be close. At this time Corporal Tutor received a phone call from another supervisor on the original scene. The supervisor was giving him important information regarding the circumstances of the alleged crime that the suspect committed. Corporal Tutor paused his search to determine whether to continue with his partner.

Corporal Tutor then advised me after speaking with the supervisor for a period of time, Paco raised from the down position and engaged him in the crotch with a bite. Corporal Tutor then advised that K-9 Paco ignored repeated commands to stop biting him. Corporal Tutor attempted to use several common techniques to make Paco disengage without success. Corporal Tutor worked his thumb and eventually his hand into Paco's mouth to force him to release his bite on him. Once Paco transitioned to Corporal Tutor's

hand and wrist, he was able to get him to release his bite and put him in his patrol vehicle. Corporal Tutor then received medical attention.

Why did Paco bite Corporal Tutor in the specific area (crotch)?

It is well documented that pack-animals in a pack or hunting group (wolves, lions, etc..) is an ever-evolving hierarchy. Younger males will challenge the authority of older alpha males in combat at certain times. This is the same with what we consider domesticated K-9s and certainly with working K-9s trained to hunt for and to apprehend human beings.

It is not uncommon for a handler to be nipped by their partner early in their training. It is also common for it to happen at times during stressful scenarios and sometimes after a hard correction. These nips can be attributed to them learning their role in the hierarchy, or a self-preservation act by the K-9. A full attack by the K-9 to the genitalia specifically is a sign that Paco was attempting to eliminate the established alpha male, Corporal Tutor. It is well documented that some more aggressive animals will mutilate the genitalia of another male to ensure their continued dominance in the pack.

With the majority of working dogs in the police and military field, the working dogs understand their roles as subservient to the actual human handler in charge of them. However, there are several documented instances of working dogs that have tried to “take control” of the hierarchy between handler and K-9. In some situations, this issue can be resolved through training depending on the skill set of the handler / trainer and the trainability of the K-9. The K-9 must have ingrained traits and instincts that help it to understand and accept its role in the hierarchy. The K-9 must also have the “mentality” to accept this training which can be affected by his experiences throughout the K-9’s career.

I believe that the biggest contributing factor in Paco’s case is the number of traumatizing events that he has experienced. Corporal Tutor and K-9 Paco to my understanding have experienced several events that would lead to Paco having a hypersensitization to stress and rapidly evolving situations that would cause his behavior to be unpredictable in the future. It is well documented that military K-9s have been declared unfit to perform from traumatic events in their past. This is true for police K-9s as well. While not all of these documented instances resulted in the handler being attacked, it does happen.

What is the best action to take with Paco?

After analyzing the information given to me, it is my determination that K-9 Paco is unfit for duty. I also believe that the best course of action is the immediate euthanizing of K-9 Paco. It would be unrealistic to believe that a dog with this level of training and skill to be given to someone as a pet or to pass on this potential danger to another department.

I would also add that this should not be a reflection of the training that Paco received under Corporal Tutor and other trainers. I have observed Corporal Tutor’s training methods and discussed his training on multiple occasions. I have certified Corporal Tutor and Paco, and others in the Tupelo K-9 Unit. The Tupelo Police Department has a top-notch K-9 Unit under Corporal Tutor and should not be judged on this particular outlier that has many contributing factors as a result of serving the citizens of Tupelo.

Please contact me if I can be of further help.

Respectfully,

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