

**Options:**[Results list](#) | [Start a New Search](#) | [Printer Friendly Version](#)**Elderly man found dead in pre-dawn dog attack****BYLINE:** JOHNSON, ROB Rob Johnson Staff writer STAFF**DATE:** April 13, 1990**PUBLICATION:** The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution**EDITION:** The Atlanta Constitution**SECTION:** LOCAL NEWS**PAGE:** E/6

An 81-year-old south Gwinnett County man who was **killed** Thursday by his next-door neighbor's part **pit bull** terrier apparently wandered over before dawn to see the chained animal, investigators said. James C. Mills, who lived in a mobile home at 2835 N. Deshon Road near Stone Mountain, was found **by** the dog's owner at about 7:15 a.m., Gwinnett police spokesman Larry Walton said.

Mr. Mills died from multiple trauma to the head and neck, according to the Gwinnett medical examiner's office.

"I think this was an accident, pure and simple," said Hal Bennett, a Gwinnett medical investigator. "I played with the dog a little while afterwards even. I'm told that this man was a bit of an insomniac who kind of liked to get outside sometimes.

"He walked into the dog's domain, and I'm sure he just surprised the dog," said Mr. Bennett. "The dog had no history of being vicious and was probably asleep when he came over to the yard. He had been around those dogs many times before."

He said he thought Mr. Mills fell - and died - almost instantly, adding that the dog apparently knocked Mr. Mills down.

"The dog weighed 75 pounds," Mr. Bennett said, "and the man weighed only about 135."

The dog involved in the attack was taken to the Gwinnett Animal Shelter. Authorities have made no decision on whether to destroy the animal, named Bandit, said Steven S. Schildecker, Gwinnett's public safety director.

However, one of Mr. Mills's sons said the animal should die.

"I just want the dog **killed**," said Bryant Mills. "It's **killed** a man, and it's vicious, I think."

Carlton Wright, who owns Bandit and another dog, told police he heard barking about 5:30 a.m., said Officer Walton. When Mr. Wright went out to feed his dogs less than two hours later, he found Mr. Mills's body in the yard with the dog beside him, a family member said.

Officer Walton said the dogs had been properly secured and had up-to-date inoculations. He said police had no plans to charge Mr. Wright in the incident.

Mr. Mills's granddaughter, Robin Whitesides, said she couldn't understand why her grandfather was next door long before sunrise.

"We don't know why he was up at that hour, why he went over there. He's the only one who will ever know that," Ms. Whitesides said. "He was in real good health. If this hadn't happened, he probably would have lived to be 100."

Cheryl Mills, the victim's daughter-in-law, said the Wrights called her family "as soon as they found him. They didn't want to touch him, but they just thought he was hurt at first."

At the Wrights' trailer 30 yards away, the family declined to comment. An old, blind yellow dog said to be Bandit's sister, was chained to a tree, barking ho arselly in the side yard.

Mr. Wright, who has owned the two animals for almost 10 years, kept them chained next to his home, Officer Walton said.

Another of Mr. Mills's son, Charles Mills, had recently had a stroke and was taking the news very hard, family members said.

"He was a good man," said Charles Mills, walking with a cane as his family helped him into a truck. "A very good man."

Ms. Whitesides said the elder Mr. Mills had moved to the Stone Mountain area long ago from Sylva, N.C. and started a business that specialized in tree-cutting, stump removal and firewood. The side yard of his trailer was full of trucks and power equipment used in the business, which Mr. Mills had taught to his sons.

Staff writer Bill Rankin also contributed to this article.

Photo: Robin Whitesides (left), the granddaughter of James C. Mills, stands with his daughter-in-law, Cheryl Mills, outside the family's home. / Steve Deal / Staff

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- Scripps Howard News Service** - October 22, 1990

**PEOPLE WHO DIED FROM DOG BITE INJURIES**

Here are the people who died from dog-bite injuries in the United States so far this year: Jan. 17 -- Marjee Lilly, 70 years old, Los Angeles. Victim attacked by two Pit bulls while feeding dogs at grandson's house. Jan. 21 -- Anna Lynn Pagliaro, 5 days old, Florence, N.J. Attacked by the family's Siberian Husky while sleeping in crib. Feb. 7 -- Lillian Butler, 72, Memphis. Pit bull escaped from neighboring yard and attacked victim. March 15 -- Tonya M. Elliott, 2-1/2,...

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- Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (PA)** - September 28, 1990

**THEIR BITE IS WORSE THAN THEIR BARK DOG ATTACKS KILL ABOUT 20 EACH YEAR ACROSS U.S., MOST OF THEM CHILDREN**

Jason Lee Wilson didn't have a chance. Playing in the yard outside a South Carolina trailer home, the 5-year-old boy lost his life when a neighbor's dog attacked. By the time Jason's mother reached him, the youngster was dead, his neck broken. The dog, a cross between a pit bull and a Rottweiler, was still attacking. The animal later was shot and killed. Its owner was charged with involuntary manslaughter. The fatal incident, which took place in July, is one of 15 deaths caused by...

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- The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution** - April 17, 1990

**Dog that attacked and killed Gwinnett man is put to death**

Bandit, the part pit bull terrier that killed an 81-year-old south Gwinnett man last week, was put to death late Monday afternoon, a Gwinnett County police spokesman said. "The agreement was worked out between our people and the owner of the dog, that if the man did definitely die because the dog perpetrated the attack, we would put him down," spokesman Larry Walton said Monday. According to the Gwinnett medical examiner's office, James C. Mills died from massive head and neck...

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4. **The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution** - April 13, 1990**Elderly man found dead in pre-dawn dog attack**

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5. **The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution** - April 13, 1990**Officials view dog attack that killed man as accident**

An 81-year-old man who was killed Thursday by his next-door neighbor's part pit bull terrier apparently wandered over before dawn to see the chained animal, Gwinnett County investigators said. James C. Mills, who lived in a mobile home at 2835 N. Deshon Road near Stone Mountain, was found by the dog's owner about 7:15 a.m., Gwinnett police spokesman Larry Walton said. Mr. Mills died from multiple trauma to the head and neck, according to the Gwinnett medical examiner's office....

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6. **The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution** - April 12, 1990**81-year-old bitten by dog found dead Neighbor's mixed-breed pit bull terrier was chained during 5:30 a.m. attack**

An 81-year-old South Gwinnett County man died early today after being attacked by a neighbor's mixed-breed pit bull terrier in the neighbor's yard, police said. The body of James C. Mills, who lived in a mobile home at 2835 North Deshong Road near Stone Mountain, was found by the dog's owner about 7:15 a.m., Gwinnett police spokesman Larry Walton said. Relatives said the man did not appear to have been seriously mauled, leading to speculation the shock of the attack might have...

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