

## Dogs Attack and Kill Mail Carrier in Florida, Officials Say

Pamela Jane Rock had been out delivering mail when her vehicle broke down in Putnam County, Fla. Then, five dogs attacked her, the authorities said.

By Eduardo Medina

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Mary Campbell glanced out the window of her Florida home on Sunday afternoon, trying to figure out where the muffled cries for help were coming from. She heard them again, this time a bit louder, though clearly coming far from her house: “Help!”

A few minutes later, she saw an ambulance and sheriff’s deputies drive down the rural dirt road that makes up Walker Drive in Putnam County, and park beside the house where five combative dogs lived, she said.

Soon, neighbors learned the grim details of what had occurred, according to the authorities: A mail carrier whose vehicle had broken down had been attacked by five dogs. She died the next day.

“They’re all aggressive,” Ms. Campbell said of the dogs.



Pamela Jane Rock, a mail carrier in Putnam County, Fla., was fatally attacked by dogs over the weekend.  
First Coast News

The rural mail carrier, Pamela Jane Rock, 61, was screaming for help as she lay on the ground, trying to fend off the dogs, according to the Putnam County Sheriff’s Office.

Several neighbors rushed to help Ms. Rock by trying to pull the dogs off her while another neighbor fired a rifle into the ground, trying to scare them, the sheriff’s office said.

When deputies arrived, the sheriff’s office said, they found the dogs behind a fence and Ms. Rock bleeding. They applied three tourniquets to stem her blood loss and took her to a hospital. As they drove her, Ms. Rock went into cardiac arrest, and she died from her injuries the next day, Col. Joseph Wells, a spokesman for the sheriff’s office, said at a news conference on Tuesday.

The United States Postal Service said in a statement that it was “deeply saddened at the loss of our employee. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and her co-workers at this time.”

A brother of Ms. Rock’s, who did not provide a name, said by phone on Tuesday that the family was in shock and declined to comment further.

Tyler Neelon, 24, a neighbor of the dogs’ owner, said by phone on Tuesday that on Sundays, Ms. Rock would often place an apple alongside residents’ mail inside mailboxes.

“She was the sweetest,” he said.

The dogs, described by Ms. Campbell as mixed-breed, medium size and mean, were taken by animal control workers, who will euthanize them at a later date, Colonel Wells said.

The owner of the dogs was not named by the sheriff's office. Colonel Wells said the attack was still under investigation and that it was possible that the owner would face charges, though he did not specify what those could be.

The authorities said the dogs had escaped from a property by moving rocks at the bottom of a fence that had kept them secured. One neighbor, Colonel Wells said, told deputies that the dogs had previously been secured like that "for a period of time and didn't suspect anything like this" could happen.

But Ms. Campbell said that the dogs "jumped the fence all the time," causing occasional chaos in the neighborhood. Once, Mr. Neelon said, the dogs killed a Chihuahua.

In 2011, a similar episode occurred in Putnam County when two dogs attacked and killed a 74-year-old man, tearing off his right arm and part of his left, The Florida Times-Union reported.

The owner of those dogs, Colonel Wells said at the news conference, was charged with misdemeanors related to the dog attack.

In the past three years, there had been four calls related to aggressive animals in the neighborhood; at least two of those calls involved the same address where the five dogs from Sunday's attack lived, Colonel Wells said.

Ms. Campbell said that she had stopped letting her daughter walk to and from the school bus stop in the block, fearful that the dogs would again escape their fence. She said the dog owner was an older man who had acted apathetic when she confronted him about his dogs.

The death of Ms. Rock came about two months after the United States Postal Service released a report that documented more than 5,400 dog attacks on postal employees across the country in 2021. In 2019, there were 5,803 documented attacks.

Florida alone had 201 attacks in 2021, up from 199 the previous year.

Ms. Campbell said that Ms. Rock had been beloved in the neighborhood because "she actually took the time to get to know people."

While bringing mail to the door, she said, Ms. Rock would sometimes give children candy.

"She was just a good person," Ms. Campbell said.

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