

“That shock collar had embedded in his neck:” Vet describes dog boarded by Off Leash K9 Training

by: Jessica Fuller, 6ABC Wate.com, May 17, 2019

A Johnson City veterinarian said she treated a dog that was suffering injuries from a shock collar while he was boarded at Off-Leash K9 Training facility.

Dr. Dana Still, who practices at Veterinary Medical Center, said it was the summer of 2016 when Blue’s owner brought him in with concerns about his eyes. Blue, a Great Dane, was about 11 months old at the time and had been boarded at the facility for about three weeks.

Still said Blue’s eyes were bright red and irritated and that he was suffering from conjunctivitis. She discovered more details when she removed his collar.

“The trainer came and picked Blue up from our clinic for another week,” Still said. “The owner was also there and he had known of the dog’s previous condition. I made it a point to speak with the trainer in the lobby.”

Still provided News Channel 11 with more detail of the results from Blue’s time with the trainer.

“His neck was so edematous and swollen above (his collar) that I took his normal collar off and you could tell where that shock collar had embedded in his neck, left little prong marks,” Still said. I told the owner, ‘This is from the shock collar,’ it was so tight around his neck and, I guess, left there for the entire duration, that it caused damage to his skin and eyes.”

She said Blue also suffered from anxiety after the incident, to the point that he was suffering from severe diarrhea each time he went to the vet.

“I told her (the trainer) there was no excuse for him to have been in that condition and that he was not the same happy dog he had been in the past,” Still said. “The trainer had absolutely no response and took Blue out the door.”

Still added that Blue had been coming to her office ever since he was a puppy and was always friendly with the staff.

“He was a different dog, it’s taken him a while to get back to being relaxed and being his old self, which is sad because everybody noticed the huge difference,” she said.

Nearly three years after Blue left the facility, another dog, an 8-month-old miniature bull terrier named Dallas, died from starvation at the facility.

The death of the dog led to the arrest of Randi LaFerney, the owner of the facility, and a

trainer, Andrew Hunigan. The pair are facing animal cruelty charges.

LaFerney issued a statement earlier today on the accusations of animal abuse, saying, “The first time I laid eyes on Dallas other than his puppy consult in December was on May 2nd after I received a heartbreaking call that he had died.”

[Read the full statement HERE.](#)

Shock collars are sometimes used in training to get a dog’s attention, but Still said they should be used carefully.

“If you’re going to use a shock collar, put it on yourself and see what level you’re setting it at,” she said. “If you’re going to put it on a 10 and put it around a dog’s neck, see how hard you’re shocking them.”

(This story has been edited to reflect the comments of still responding to the trainer)

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