

DOG INJURED BY BARK COLLAR AT DALLAS KENNEL
by Brooke Richie DALLAS (CBS 11 News)

One North Texas family says when they went away on vacation, the kennel they paid to take care of their dog used a collar that delivers a shock to a dog when it barks. While Sutton the Dog's owners were in Hawaii, she stayed at the Park Cities Obedience School and Dog Daycare in Dallas. "This dog's a real rambunctious player and barks a lot, barks almost constantly," said Phillip Marr, the owner of the dog daycare. When Sutton returned home, her neck was dotted with puncture wounds. "I thought she'd been attacked by another dog or something, because she had three open wounds and her neck was burned from ear to ear," said Sutton's owner, Mandy Parker.

Sutton's other owner is a CBS Network sales employee who brought these injuries to our attention. The Parkers' concern turned to anger when they learned the wounds were from a bark collar. "We've never put a shock collar on Sutton, and we would never allow someone else to," said Mandy. Marr admits that the collar was probably left on too long. But he calls the bark collars "a pretty accepted thing in all dog training. I've never known very many people that didn't use them. Almost everyone uses them for an excessive barker."

He said the injuries were "a terrible accident... It actually worked around to the side of the head, and in all his rough play and rolling around, got too much pressure on the side of his neck and actually put the marks on the side of his neck." We sent these pictures to Dr. Bonnie Beaver, a professor of small animal medicine and surgery at Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine. She says the brown spots on Sutton, "suggest that the collar had been on for a while... perhaps longer than a day." Beaver calls bark collars "inhumane" and says, "They should never be used." In fact, 15 kennels in North Texas said they never use bark collars.

Lisa Praeger, training director at Country Acres Kennels, says they never should be. "That is absolute abuse and ridiculous," she said. "That punishment does not justify the crime under any circumstance." "If they did not have that specifically stated in their boarding release, that they do use anti-bark collars, then I think it's an inappropriate act," said veterinarian Erica Erickson. Marr says he will change his boarding release to include permission to use bark collars. The American Boarding Kennels Association says there's a lesson here. A pet owner should always ask before they board. Sutton's owners now know better. "We'll definitely research that before we ever board her again," said Mandy. Park Cities Obedience School and Dog Daycare did take Sutton to the vet when they noticed her injuries. They also paid for the vet bill and the boarding.

But Sutton's owners say they will never go back there.

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