



## \$500,000 SETTLEMENT, DOG ATTACK

Case Name: Stockdale v. Desbian et. al  
Venue: Jackson County, Missouri

The Accurso Law Firm settled a case for \$500,000 in 2011 for a little boy who was attacked by three dogs in August 2010. The boy was a guest in a Kansas City home where his mother was hired to do cleaning. After deciding to stay the evening the boy's mother told authorities she put her son down to sleep in a guest bedroom. The owner of the home left the residence a short time later and the boy was attacked late in the evening. The boy's mother discovered her son and claimed she broke up the attack. When the mother awoke a neighbor to call 911 with the bloodied boy in her arms the neighbor believed the boy was going to die.

Fortunately the boy was helped in time to stop his severe bleeding and was able to make nearly a complete recovery from his injuries, although scar revision surgery may be necessary in the future. Plaintiff's attorney, Burt Haigh, said that "the strict liability statutes in Missouri really played an important role in getting this young boy the help and resolution he deserved. We are proud that he will have such a significant amount for his future from this policy limits settlement."

The case presented a number of challenges, especially since the mother, who was a defendant in the case for negligent supervision claims, proffered that her own father should act as the next friend to the boy. "Their plan was stated clearly in open court by her father, that he wished to be named next friend and that he planned to not include the boy's mother as a defendant, even though she was the only supervising adult when the attack occurred. This would have left an 'open chair' defense for the dog owner and we were pleased that the Court saw through this obvious conflict of interest" said Haigh.

The settlement amount will ensure that the young child will have the resources necessary for scar revision surgeries and emotional counseling that will help him move forward with his life.