

Gang member punches Sandy Springs K9 with brass knuckles (story from AJC)

One of three gang members arrested Monday punched a Sandy Springs police K9 Rock with a set of spiked brass knuckles, police said.

Jonathan Wimbs, 25, of Atlanta, Aron Davis, 24, of Lithonia, and a 14-year-old boy were arrested after allegedly breaking into a car outside a home in the 5400 block of Chemin De Vie in Sandy Springs.

Sandy Springs police spokeswoman Sgt. Forrest Bohannon said the two adults are Rollin 60 Crips gang members. She wouldn't comment about the 14-year-old.

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Broken promises: How workers became caught in the kafala system

The resident said he and his wife returned home from out of town early Monday morning and went to bed with a window open, according to a police report. He heard noises and eventually went to investigate, finding the interior car light in his work truck on. He told police he hadn't driven the car all weekend.

Two men got out of his car when he yelled at them and took off into the woods behind the house, according to the report. Nothing of value was reported missing from the truck, but one of the suspects dropped a handgun that police determined had been stolen out of DeKalb County.

Sandy Springs K9 Unit officer James Reynnells and K9 Django tracked Wimbs to a wooded area outside the Fountain Oaks Shopping Center on Roswell Road. The trail went cold, but because the officers knew the direction Wimbs traveled, Officer Michael DeWald was able to set up a perimeter and release his dog, Rock, to search for the scent, DeWald said.

Rock sniffed out the subject, who was hiding in a drainage system ditch that dropped about eight feet down, DeWald said.

When Rock bit into Wimbs' left arm, Wimbs pulled a set of spiked brass knuckles and punched Rock about six times.

Though the dog let go after being punched repeatedly, Rock chased Wimbs, biting his leg to bring him down to the ground where DeWald arrested him.

"Our dogs have a high fight drive," DeWald said. "The dogs meet the physical prowess of their rivals as a first line of defense."

That "fight drive" is genetic, DeWald said, which is why Sandy Springs police only get their dogs from trainer Pam Rogers at Kasseburg Canine Training Center in Alabama.

Rock had three puncture wounds above his eye and needed four stitches, DeWald said. His eye socket was swollen and Rock lost a lot of blood from his nose, but the K9 officer returned to work Tuesday on

limited duty, basically hanging out in the truck and resting up, DeWald said.

“I couldn’t have been more proud of my dog,” DeWald said. “He did exactly what he was supposed to do, as he was trained and he didn’t hesitate one second.”

Rock, a 10-year-old Belgian Malinois, and DeWald have been partners since 2009.

“This dog is amazing,” DeWald said. “I love this dog.”

DeWald said this is the second violent assault on police dogs in a few weeks. Earlier in April, a Doraville K9 dog was stabbed as he helped capture a fugitive in a Dunwoody subdivision. DeWald certified that dog, K9 Tryko, on April 1, just days before the attack, he said.

Wimbs was booked into Fulton County Jail on several charges, including destroying or causing serious or debilitating injury to a police dog, entering automobile with intent to commit theft, possession of a firearm and a charge related to being associated with a criminal street gang.