

# Paralysis won't keep this dog down

By all accounts, Red is a great dog. The 7-year-old pit bull knows more than a dozen commands — verbally and through hand signals. He is playful, smart, protective. And that last attribute almost got him killed.

Back in July, two gunmen attacked and robbed Red's elderly owner in his West Side garage, beat him severely and tied him up. Then they burglarized the man's home, where Red was. And they shot the dog. The attack is still under investigation, according to the Chicago Police Department.

"I guess Red was doing his job, defending his master's property, and they shot him in the back, paralyzed him," said the victim, a man in his 60s who asked that his name not be used.

Red ended up at Animal Care and Control; his owner ended up in the hospital. When he was released, he visited the recovering Red.

"I'd come in, hobbling with my swollen face and black eyes, and I'd kiss him and he'd kiss me, you know?"

Finally he had to make a choice: Take Red home or have him put down.

Because he lives on a second floor and has health issues, he couldn't carry a paralyzed 50-pound dog up and down the stairs several times a day. So he decided to let Red go.

"The girl (at Animal Care and Control) and I both cried," he said of the day he made the decision. "The staff there all got to know him and they liked him."

But then, a PAWS Chicago representative, making one of the shelter's daily runs to pull animals from the Animal Care and Control facility, was told about Red. The dog quickly won the hearts of the agency's volunteers, who donated funds to purchase a cart to help him get around. And Saturday he'll be in PAWS' adoption center at 1997 N. Clybourn Ave., ready to be adopted.



Red, a pit bull whose hindquarters were paralyzed when robbers shot him, gets around with a specially made set of wheels. PHIL VELASQUEZ/TRIBUNE PHOTO

"Red is obviously a very special dog," says Rochelle Michalek, PAWS' executive director. "He has the best disposition. He's one of the best dogs you'll ever see. The bullet severed his spine, but

you'd never know it. He's happy, he loves to play. He's a big snuggler."

— William Hageman