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Was Miniature Horse Victim Of Neglect?

Hooves cut with hacksaw, owner denies neglect accusation

One small creature has made a big impression on an animal rescue group in southwest Iowa. It worries the animal might not survive injuries suffered by possible neglect.

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One small creature has made a big impression on an animal rescue group in southwest Iowa. It worries the animal might not survive injuries suffered by possible neglect.

Little Willie won't go home, not after animal rescuer Genea Stoops found the miniature horse's hooves cut with a hacksaw. "It's extremely painful for this horse to be in this condition."

A Mills County sheriff's deputy spotted Little Willie hobbling loose on a highway near Tabor, Iowa and called in Hooves and Paws Rescue to pick up the horse. Taken to a foster stable, Willie was examined by veterinarian Dr. Bill Rishel.

Though miniature, the horse is mature, maybe up to 20 years old and Willie may have been hobbling on improperly trimmed hooves for five years. Because the hooves and leg are so sore it would be too painful to move him, the vet brought out a portable X-ray machine.

The X-rays gave the vet a better look at Willie's chances for survival. "If we've lost the bone inside the hoof capsule then it's very difficult, no matter how we trim it, to make the horse comfortable," said Dr. Rishel.

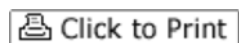
X-rays and treatment for Willie could cost several thousand dollars, but the owner has surrendered the horse to animal rescue, which now must pay the vet bills. "We're going to try and get him fixed up," said Stoops.

Little Willie is in pain and like the way he walks, his future is touch and go.

The veterinarian reports have been turned over to the Mills County sheriff to determine if there's evidence of animal neglect. The owner tells Channel 6 News the horse suffered a disease that caused hoof problems and he was trying to make the animal more comfortable. He says Willie was well fed and not neglected.

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