

# Metropolitan

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## A furry ball of fury turns man's getaway into battle for survival

**Rabid fox attacks**  
builder, dinner guests.

By RICK MONTGOMERY  
Staff Writer

Jon Barnett thought a few weeks of work on a friend's house in rural upstate New York would be a peaceful getaway from the bustle of Kansas City.

Then, on Wednesday afternoon, he encountered *The Thing That Wouldn't Leave*.

Barnett, a remodeling contractor, was building a patio deck for his friend in the Catskill Mountains when he was startled by "a ball of fur and a little face coming my way."

Barnett, 34, yelled at the critter, which then lunged at him. Barnett tried kicking it away. A plank to the animal's head didn't faze it. Barnett scrambled inside the house and locked the patio door.

He then noticed a bite wound on his left leg. He went to a hospital for rabies shots.

Five hours later, Barnett was back sawing boards when it returned from the woods: *The Thing That Wouldn't Leave, Part II*.

Barnett cursed at it, ripped



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the patio screen off and locked himself inside again. As the ball of fur chewed on a garden hose, Barnett was able to distinguish it as a rabid fox.

He grabbed a portable phone and fled his friend's house for his pickup truck. Speeding to the nearest neighbor, several hundred yards away, Barnett phoned authorities.

The neighbors were home. Barnett warned them of *The Thing*. And just then, dinner guests pulled into the driveway

— followed by the fox.

It nipped on the foot of one guest, who immediately shut the car door and stayed put. Barnett rushed into the home and the fox, frothing at the mouth, leapt for the doors and windows.

"It's a rabid fox!" Barnett shouted to the dinner guests, who promptly backed out of the driveway — over the fox, which jumped right back to its feet and gave chase.

A thought raced through Barnett's head. "I don't like killing anything, but I wanted to kill this sucker," he said later in a telephone interview from New York.

He ran to his truck, hunted down the fox and ran over it. Twice.

The *Thing* was dead. The horror was over.

The local press was all over the story the next day. Barnett would later learn that rabid animals are most bothered by noises — such as the buzz of his circular saw, his frantic shouting and car engines.

Barnett felt a little stupid.

So much for his leisurely stay in the Catskills. He plans to return to Kansas City today. "I'm looking forward to it," he said.