Rock County dog adopted after being badly burned

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JANESVILLE, Wis. (WMTV)-- After being burned and going through intense surgeries and hearing, Sunny has been adopted by a family in Janesville.

It was the worst burn wound a veterinarian with the Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin had ever seen on an animal. Sunny, a young Labrador mix, was so badly burned by hot water that her skin started falling off.

"She's in her forever home. We officially adopted her about two months ago," said Jennefer Lueck. "She's healing wonderful. She's on the road to recovery and just doing fantastic."

Lueck said she knew Sunny was meant to be in their family from the first time they met.

"She didn't try to bite me when she was in so much pain. I knew she was going to be a gentle dog to be around my child and other animals," said Lueck.

Lueck and her family took Sunny in when she was healing. Surgery after surgery, they helped her get to where she is at today. Thanks to The Thinking K9, she is set up for free training for life, too.

"A lot of confidence building because these scars, they go much much deeper than just the skin and what we can see on the outside," said Barbara Smith with The Thinking K9.

Sunny will always require special care.

"She has to have infant sunblock put on her, otherwise she would have to have a hat and a shirt on if it's going to be an all-day thing. She could get sun burnt very easily without having hair to protect her," said Lueck.

But from now on, there's no slowing her down.

"There were times when we thought she wasn't going to get up and walk every again. She was in so much pain. She just started running one day. We didn't even think it was possible for her to run that quick but I think she started running and she hasn't stopped since," said Lueck.

Cody Sholes from Beloit was charged with a felony for mistreatment of an animal. In a criminal complaint, authorities said Sholes claimed he found Sunny covered in urine and feces and then put the dog in a bathtub, ran the water, and left the dog in the tub. The criminal complaint also details that Sholes said he had turned the water heater up to the highest temperature because the water in his apartment was cold.

He pleaded not guilty in January and his trial date has not been set. A status conference is scheduled for June 12th. WMTV staff reached out to his lawyer for comment but did not hear back.