

Boy, 3, Thrown Into Crocodile Enclosure — Johnsons of Old Hurst Zoo

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Date: 18 June 2026

Location: Johnsons of Old Hurst, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire

Victim: 3-year-old boy (name not released)

Suspect: 30-year-old man from Norfolk (name not released)

Status: Suspect bailed until 18 September 2026; boy in critical but stable condition

Charge: Attempted murder (suspect assessed as unfit for interview)

Incident Summary

On Thursday 18 June 2026 at approximately 1:24pm, a 3-year-old boy was thrown into the crocodile enclosure at Johnsons of Old Hurst, a family-run farm and zoo in Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire. The 30-year-old suspect — described by witnesses as a "mentally disabled man who broke away from his carers" (per the Metro) — allegedly picked up the child and threw him into the 15ft-deep enclosure in front of horrified visitors. The suspect and victim were not known to each other; police described the attack as random.

The boy landed on the concrete floor of the enclosure and rolled into the water, where he was attacked by at least one Nile crocodile. He suffered a broken arm and broken pelvis. The zoo owner's wife, Tracey Johnson, jumped into the enclosure to rescue the child before the crocodiles could reach him further. Staff pulled the boy to safety, administered first aid, and he was rushed to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge — initially by air ambulance (Magpas), then by road ambulance.

Suspect Details

- 30-year-old man from Norfolk (name withheld)
- Arrested at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder
- **Not known to the victim** — a random attack (DI Verity McCann, Cambridgeshire Police)
- Described by the Metro as "mentally disabled" and had "broken away from his carers" before the incident
- **Released on bail Friday 19 June** after being assessed as "unfit for police interview"
- Bailed until 18 September 2026 pending further investigation
- Cambridgeshire Police's major crime unit is leading the investigation

The Rescue — Tracey Johnson

Tracey Johnson, wife of zoo owner Andy Johnson, jumped into the 15ft crocodile enclosure to save the boy. A villager who did not want to be named told PA Media: "Apparently, the wife of the zoo owner, Tracey Johnson, jumped in to the enclosure to save the child."

Chris Newman, director of the National Centre For Reptile Welfare, said: "I know Tracey very well and she's a lovely lady and it's nothing more than I'd expect from her. She'd always put her own life at risk to save someone else. She's an extraordinary lady and very brave. She put herself in immense danger."

Johnson was not injured in the rescue. The Daily Mail later reported she had just become a grandmother — making the rescue even more poignant.

The Crocodiles

The zoo houses two large Nile crocodiles — **Romeo** (male) and **Cuddles** (female) — both measuring between 9ft and 11ft, with Romeo weighing up to 485lbs (220kg). There are also smaller crocodiles named **Albert** and **Kisses**.

In a 2019 interview with The Sun, Andy Johnson said of Cuddles: "Cuddles isn't that cuddly. She took my fingers a few weeks ago." Of Romeo he said: "He loves the back of his leg being tickled."

The enclosure has a 4ft fence around the walkway, with a 15ft drop to the enclosure floor and water below.

Victim's Condition

- Critical but stable as of 19 June 2026
- Suffered a **broken arm** and **broken pelvis**
- Was attacked by at least one crocodile (per Metro)
- Transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge
- Specialist officers supporting the family
- Local eyewitness Pete Lewis told the Telegraph: "I did see the boy being carried out. It appeared that staff or members of the public had gone into the enclosure to rescue the boy and almost certainly prevented further injury."

Zoo Response

Johnsons of Old Hurst released a statement on social media:

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the boy and his family following the incident that occurred today. Out of respect to the family, our tropical house will remain closed until further notice. If you have any questions about the incident, please direct inquiries to Cambridgeshire police constabulary. The rest of the site will remain open as normal.”

The zoo is a family-run farm and tourist attraction featuring a butcher, farm shop, tea room and steakhouse alongside the zoo. It is home to over 100 animals including African lions, Bengal tigers, sloth bears, capybaras, meerkats, crocodiles, alligators and caimans.

Police Response

Detective Inspector Verity McCann (Cambridgeshire Constabulary):

“We do not believe the man arrested and the child are known to each other. At this stage we are speaking to people who were at the zoo at the time of this distressing incident to understand more about the circumstances.”

“Our inquiries are ongoing as we continue to understand the circumstances surrounding this distressing incident. Our thoughts remain with the boy, and his family and specialist officers continue to support them through this difficult time.”

Ben Obese-Jecty, MP for Huntingdon:

“This is now a live criminal investigation and I would ask people to refrain from speculation online. The police will provide an update with further information in due course. My thoughts are with the young victim and his family during a hugely traumatic and difficult time.”

East of England Ambulance Service: An ambulance, a rapid response vehicle, an ambulance officer vehicle and a Magpas air ambulance attended the scene.

Eyewitness Accounts

Pete Lewis, who was at the zoo at the time, told the Telegraph: "I did see the boy being carried out. It appeared that staff or members of the public had gone into the enclosure to rescue the boy and almost certainly prevented further injury." He said someone came into a tea room calling for help as a boy had "fallen into the crocodile water" and "next thing we knew, staff were coming from all directions and a truck or a buggy was rushing around, and then a guy carried the poor lad out and put him on a trailer to administer first aid."

A local person told the Sun: "Apparently the boy has a broken pelvis and a broken arm, but thankfully the crocodile didn't actually get to him" (though the Metro reports at least one crocodile did attack him).

Another local, Mike Annicelli, 52, who lives nearby, said four-foot fencing surrounds the walkway and there is a 15ft drop down to the crocodiles.

Far-Right & Online Reaction

The story was seized upon by far-right and anti-immigration accounts within hours, following a familiar pattern of demanding the suspect's name and ethnicity be released, assuming the suspect was a Muslim immigrant or asylum seeker, and framing the bail release as evidence of a "two-tier" justice system.

X / Twitter (via Nitter)

@**Honesttruthman** (Jun 18):

"It couldn't be more obvious this crocodile zoo attacker is a Muslim. Woke police & government always hide the identity when they're guilty. 30yo man from Norfolk? Yeah right. Same playbook as every grooming gang, stabbing, or terror attack name suppression."

@Ebiewon (Jun 19) — multiple posts demanding the suspect's identity, using the "cousin's cousin" dogwhistle:

“ "Was the 30yr old man who threw a toddler into Johnsons Zoo crocodile enclosure one of these cousin's cousin??? We, the public have a right to know."
"Hey @CambsCops @Keir_Starmer IS THIS A COUSIN COUSIN OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS 30yr old man who threw a toddler into a crocodile enclosure? Identify him, the public has a right to know."

@dekingdomofnews (Jun 19):

“ "HORROR at Johnsons of Old Hurst zoo: 30yo man from Norfolk throws 3yo boy into CROCODILE enclosure... Suspect arrested for attempted murder... then RELEASED on bail the next day. Name hidden. This is UK justice in 2026?
#CrocodileAttack #UKCrime #JusticeFail"

@W_L_M__U_K (Jun 19):

“ "I just want to get this straight. The man arrested on suspicion of throwing a 3-year-old boy into a crocodile enclosure... has been released on bail after being deemed 'unfit' for interview. Yet white British people get remanded and jailed for protesting the government, killings and mass migration!! WHAT IS HAPPENING
#StopTheBo"

@BonnellCan54763 / @Yaffa881344412 — both amplified **The Gateway Pundit** framing:

“ "HORROR: Man Throws 3-Year-Old Boy Into Crocodile Enclosure in UK Zoo – Child in Critical Condition, Police Refuse To Name the Attacker"

@britmatters (Jun 19) — news aggregation account:

Far-Right Media

The Gateway Pundit (Paul Serran, 18 Jun 2026):

- Headline: "HORROR: Man Throws 3-Year-Old Boy Into Crocodile Enclosure in UK Zoo – Child in Critical Condition, Police Refuse To Name the Attacker"
- The headline itself frames the police non-disclosure as suspicious/cover-up
- 138.7K views and 1,412 comments (as of 19 Jun)
- Shared on Gab, Gettr, Telegram — typical TGP distribution network

LifeSite News (19 Jun 2026):

- Headline: "Horrific incident at a UK zoo: 3-year-old boy thrown into crocodile enclosure, now in critical condition"
- Covered the bail with "police deemed him unfit for interview"
- LifeSite is a far-right Christian outlet; their readership overlaps with Patriotic Alternative/anti-immigration circles

britmatters — news aggregation account that led with "Learning Disabled Man" framing, emphasising the suspect's disability rather than the crime

Reddit

r/ukpolitics — "A man is alleged to have thrown a 3 year old into a crocodile enclosure yesterday. Less than 24 hours later, police say he's been released on bail because he's 'not fit for interview'. The police are going to have to explain this one." — discussed the bail decision, general outrage

r/uknews — multiple threads. Sample far-right comments:

- "I would be interested to know his immigration status and whether he had a right to be here"
- "Clearly immigrants, and no doubt taking jobs that could be done by British crocodiles" (sarcastic, mocking the anti-immigration framing)
- "Even most mentally unstable people understand right and wrong, let's stop using mental problems as an excuse"

r/news — "[Removed by moderator]" — thread was removed. Before removal: "it was a muslim immigrant just fyi"

r/europe — "they did but because he's an immigrant (more important than actual british people in the eyes of the british government) they wont release his name"

r/Crocodiles — "I have almost no doubts it will be an immigrant" / "I wonder why we don't know the suspects name yet"

Key Themes

1. **"Name hidden" / "cover-up"** — The suspect's identity was not released (standard UK practice for suspects not charged/mentally unfit), but framed as a government cover-up
2. **Presumed Muslim/immigrant** — Multiple accounts assumed the suspect was a Muslim asylum seeker with zero evidence (police stated he was from Norfolk)
3. **"Two-tier justice"** — The bail release was compared to white British protesters being jailed, using the incident to push anti-protest/anti-migration narratives
4. **Disability weaponised** — Some accounts used the suspect's learning disabilities to question the mental health system; others dismissed it as an excuse
5. **The Gateway Pundit leading the framing** — The outlet's headline set the "refuse to name the attacker" narrative that low-effort aggregation accounts repeated
6. **No engagement from known far-right YouTubers** — Hugh Anthony, Young Bob, Steve Laws, or Mark Collett did not appear to post about this incident (checked via Nitter 19 Jun)

Sources

The Guardian:

- "Man arrested after boy, three, injured in Cambridgeshire zoo crocodile enclosure" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/jun/18/man-arrested-after-boy-3-injured-in-cambridgeshire-zoo-crocodile-enclosure>
- "Man released on bail after boy, three, critically injured in zoo crocodile enclosure" (19 Jun 2026) — <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/jun/19/man-released-police-boy-three-zoo-crocodile-enclosure-cambridgeshire>

ABC News:

- "Man arrested after 3-year-old boy critically injured in crocodile enclosure: Police" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://abcnews.com/International/man-arrested-after-3-year-boy-critically-injured/story?id=134004788>
- "Suspect charged after 3-year-old boy injured in crocodile enclosure released on bail" (19 Jun 2026) — <https://abcnews.com/International/suspect-charged-after-3-year-boy-wound-crocodile/story?id=134031662>

CBS News:

- "Man charged with attempted murder after toddler ends up in crocodile enclosure at U.K. zoo" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/man-charged-with-throwing-toddler-into-crocodile-enclosure-u-k-zoo/>

CNN:

- "Man arrested in UK after toddler ends up in zoo crocodile enclosure" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://www.cnn.com/2026/06/18/uk/uk-zoo-crocodile-enclosure-intl-latam>

Metro:

- "Young boy 'thrown in crocodile pit by man who broke away from his carers'" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://metro.co.uk/2026/06/18/boy-3-fighting-life-thrown-crocodiles-uk-zoo-28832936/>

GB News:

- "Cambridge crocodile pit: Man arrested after child, 3, 'thrown into crocodile enclosure' on bail as suspect 'unfit for interview'" — <https://www.gbnews.com/news/cambridge-crocodile-pit-man-arrested-released-child>

The Independent:

- "Zoo owner's wife 'jumped into crocodile enclosure' to save boy, 3" — <https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/boy-crocodile-incident-johnsons-old-hurst-zoo-huntingdon-b2998789.html>

The Telegraph:

- "Boy, 3, thrown to crocodiles at Cambridgeshire zoo" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2026/06/18/boy-3-thrown-into-crocodile-enclosure-at-uk-zoo/>

ITV News:

- "Three-year-old boy suffers 'critical' injuries in crocodile pen" (18 Jun 2026) — <https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2026-06-18/boy-3-critically-injured-by-zoo-crocodile>

The Mirror:

- "Cambridgeshire zoo owner 'jumped into crocodile enclosure' to save boy, 3" — <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/crocodile-attack-old-hurst-zoo-37317935>

Eastern Daily Press / Ely Standard:

- "Johnsons of Old Hurst owner's wife saves boy from crocodiles" — <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/26209026.johnsons-old-hurst-owners-wife-saves-boy-crocodiles/>