



BubbaSmith is one lucky pup after firefighters who were nearby in rescue boat plucked him from Hudson River yesterday. Photo by Jeremy Bales

# Doggone happy ending after leap

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THREE FIREFIGHTERS fresh off a water rescue drill put their skills to the test yesterday to save a dog who decided to go for a swim in the Hudson River.

"I thought she was gone," the pup's owner, John Leavey, 48, told the Daily News after his harrowing ordeal. "I thought they were going to pull her out lifeless."

But BubbaSmith, a 16-month-old female bull terrier, did an end run around drowning, thanks to the Bravest.

Leavey, an event coordinator from Chelsea, and a friend were walking the leashed dog along Pier 54 around 12:30 p.m. when she suddenly jumped over a barrier and plunged into the 38-degree water, authorities said.

Leavey's friend started to scream, attract-

ing the attention of Firefighters Paul Ruckdeschel, 42, and Tim Moynihan, 46, and Fire Lt. Michael Finer, 55, who were returning to their base on Little W. 12th St. near the river.

They jumped back into their rescue boat and sped toward the pier in time to stop Leavey, who had just climbed to the edge of the water, from diving into the river himself.

Moynihan then jumped into the water attached to a tether and swam 30 feet out under the pier to find the pup, who was barely able to keep her head above water. Although BubbaSmith's leash had caught on the pier, Moynihan was able to cradle the terrified dog in his arms and bring her to safety.

"I forgot to ask if the dog bit," Moynihan said after the rescue. "Sometimes they panic and bite. But [she] was kind of happy to see me."

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Bravest who rescued BubbaSmith: (l.-r.) Firefighters Paul Ruckdeschel and Tim Moynihan and Lt. Michael Finer. Photo by Joel Cairo