

How the media gives the pit bull a bad name

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Dog breeders are often confronted with the truth that the media have no idea about dog breeds. Neither do they have an idea of what makes a "dangerous dog". Due to their misreporting of facts regarding various breeds, they have instilled an unwarranted fear in society when it comes to certain dogs, most specially, the pit bull. No dog is untrainable nor are they born vicious. Although most dogs are sociable, loving and fun, dogs like the Pit Bull are genetically predisposed to animal aggression.

There are actually several breeds of the Pit Bull that include the Terrier line like the American Staffordshire Terrier, American Pit Bull, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, the Bull Terrier and the American Bulldog. Once the poster dog representing America in the World Wars, the breed has gone from a beloved breeds used on television shows from Our Gang to Little House on the Prarie, to headlines of your local newscasts.

The media has represented the breed as a vicious attack dog even as Pit Bulls continue to work in the armed services, search and rescue efforts, therapy, and dog competitions. If a Pit Bull were truly a vicious animal, it is really doubtful that it would be the breed of choice for any of these human interaction services. The Pit Bull is normally of a tenacious, courageous nature and displays a love for their humans. It takes a huge commitment on the master's part to train such a breed. But the training is eventually worth it. The dog just cannot mingle with other dogs due to the aggression the dog poses toward its fellow dogs.

The media needs to be educated to some facts about the Pit Bull. Such as, even though the Put Bull ranks number one in breeds in the USA, it does not rank number 1 in biting. The Golden Retriever has been proven to be the

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more aggressive dog. A Pit Bull posing a danger to children is also a myth that the media propagates. No dog should ever be left unsupervised in the company of children.

Pit Bulls have also become the staple of urban mythology because people tend to fear the way they look even though the dog is of a small size. It has not helped that media reports have fuelled the hype that has seen the breed become one of the most persecuted breeds today. Dog attacks are most often the result of bad breeding and training.

If a dog farm raises the Pit Bull, one can assume that the dog has led a rough life full of mistreatment and neglect. That is not the case for all the dogs of this breed. Sadly, people would rather believe the worst of the dog rather than give it a chance to prove that is loving, kind, and playful. Pit Bull bites are over hyped and not representative of the real Pit Bull situation. According to the website Save the Pits! :

The 2004 statistics from the American Temperament Test Association show that 83. 4% of American Pit Bull Terriers passed the temperament test. This is higher than the Beagle (78. 2%) and the Border Collie (79. 6%). The temperament test consists of putting the dog through a series of confrontational situations - if the dog reacts aggressively or fearfully, it fails.

Those who report the news have to understand that there is a difference between Animal Aggression and Human Aggression. The truth of the matter is that dogs themselves can differentiate the two aggression types. Put Bulls are unlawfully bred and trained by unscrupulous breeders to participate in dog fights so animal aggression exists in the breed. Pit Bulls love human

interaction and are not even capable of differentiating between a pet loving human and a potential attacker. In the event it does bite a human, it can be rehabilitated by an animal behaviorist.

The media continues to tarnish the Pit Bulls reputation with unwarranted reports. The public must be educated about Pit Bull misconceptions because the media has never been known to be receptive of anybody telling them they are wrong.

The Pit Bull is easily confused with about 10 other breeds. There have been actual bite reports done that report a Pit Bull as the attacker but later investigations prove it was not a Pit Bull. The media does not bother to report that.

Sensationalist reporting by the media has turned the Pit Bull into an under dog. Dog bites are blown out of proportion with headlines that strike fear in the reader's hearts. The reason for this is clearly explained by the Save the Pits! Article:

Thanks to the media and general sensationalism, the Pit Bull is a newsworthy dog. In this country, bad news makes the national papers and sells more than good news, which just tends to make the local papers. The media has transformed the Pit Bull from what it used to be - America's favorite dog - into the devil dog that it is today. No one wants to see a story with the title 'Man bitten by Labrador' or 'Man bitten by Jack Russell'. Stories involving Pit Bulls are much more newsworthy, and unfortunately their popularity does not seem to be waning.

Until dog breeders, trainers, and owners can find an effective way to stop the maligning of the Pit Bull by the media, the poor dog will be unjustly accused of and punished crimes it is not capable of committing.

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