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Pit Bulls: Why are They the Most Hated of Breeds?

By Carroll Bou
Sep 14, 2007

In recent weeks, the story of [Michael Vick](#), the Atlanta Falcons player accused of bankrolling an illegal dog fighting ring and killing failed fighters, has been in news reports across the country. Facing the testimony of three of his cohorts, all of whom agreed to testify against the [NFL](#) quarterback in exchange for plea deals, and the damage that letting a judge and jury hear every disgusting detail associated with his involvement would do to his chances of avoiding incarceration; Vick accepted a plea bargain.

There are many opinions about it, but the media has only been concentrating on the two polar opposites. On one hand, you have the people that don't really see what the big deal is because "They're only dogs." They often compare dog fighting to boxing, and see nothing wrong with it. On the other hand, you have PETA and hundreds of other animal rights groups that think all animal sports are cruel and inhumane to animals, even rodeos and dog sled races.



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Somewhere in between, is a little known group of [dog owners](#) that are upset by Michael Vick's actions for a very different reason. They agree that dog fighting is an inhumane pseudo-sport because it causes the dogs severe pain, injuries and death. However, there is another reason that they're mad at Michael Vick and those like him. They believe that dog fighting is destroying the reputation of the Pitbull breed and ruining the breed itself through bad breeding and training practices.

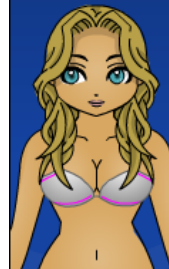
Breeders of fighters look for aggression, muscle mass and a trait known as "game." Game is the dog's determination to finish the task at hand, no matter how much pain they're in. They often have to restrain and/or muzzle [these dogs](#) during breeding so they won't kill each other. The resulting pups are then exercised to increase their strength and stamina, and trained to want to kill other dogs by using "bait dogs." These poor animals are stolen or picked up as strays or are the breeder's own dogs that don't perform well. The trainers use them as an easy target for the fighters to practice on. The inevitable result of such training, is a dog that has no chance at a happy life. Either, they fight, win and create more fighters; or they fight, lose and die a painful death; or they are seized by authorities and euthanized because they will never be suitable for rehabilitation and adoption.

Pitbulls are the most hated dogs in the world. As a breed, they're no more aggressive than any others. They beat out most other breeds in temperament tests performed by the American Temperament Test Society, including the [Golden Retriever](#) and Poodle, but bad owners create dogs that are unpredictable. These dogs are not properly socialized to people, children and other animals. They are not properly trained, and they're owned by irresponsible, ignorant people that refuse to take responsibility for their dog's training. Because of them, Pitbulls have gone from being the all-American breed, prized for their loyalty and intelligence, to the most feared and misunderstood breed ever known.

All breeds bite, but the most feared get plastered all over the news. Also, Pitbulls are often wrongly accused because people incorrectly identify the breed of the dog. People usually wrongly identify a dog as being a Pitbull or Pit mix because it has a big head or a lot of muscle. This makes things even worse.

People also have a lot of misconceptions about the breed because of myths that they have heard their entire lives. Like, "Pitbulls have locking

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laws.” False. Researchers found that a Pitbull’s jaw is no different from any other dog’s jaw. It does not lock. “Pitbulls hate kids.” Also false. Pitbulls were once known as “[nurse](#) maid dogs” because they were so reliable with small children and very protective. To this day, there are millions of children all over the world living with a Pitbull. People believe these things because they heard them all the time when they were kids and they see reports of Pitbulls killing someone in the media. There are thousands of dog attacks every year that never make the news, including a story about a 6 week old infant that was mauled to death by a [Pomeranian](#).

The problem these dog owners face now is not aggressive dogs. It’s aggressive politicians. Breed Specific Legislation, also known as BSL, is sweeping through the [land](#) like a plague. BSL is any law that affects a dog based solely on its breed, regardless of its actions, and Pitbulls are not the only ones being affected. There are dozens of breeds being included in these laws, from Pits to [Pugs](#). The most disturbing thing is that BSL punishes innocent dogs and owners while allowing irresponsible owners to hide behind it. Responsible owners are being forced to give up their dogs or move, even if their dog has never shown any aggression toward humans or animals. Irresponsible owners are given an escape when their dog bites someone because all they have to say is “It must be the breed.” If you lived in a neighborhood where the mailboxes were getting busted by teenagers, you wouldn’t ban all teens. You would want the parents of those kids to be held responsible for the cost of your mailbox, right? The same should go for dogs.

Between the media’s search for ratings, popular myths and pig-headed politicians, Pit bulls and other “vicious” breeds don’t stand a chance. The only ones fighting for them are the loving owners that take care of them, nurture them and know exactly how wonderful they really are. It may seem trivial to a lot of people, but to the thousands of Pitbull owners in the U.S., it is an everyday struggle to keep their families from being torn apart by something as ridiculous as a bad reputation.

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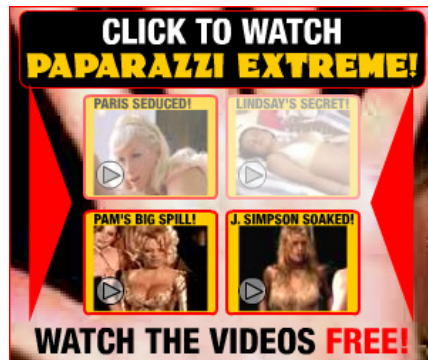
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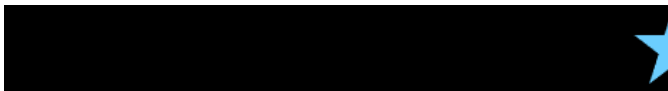
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