



Pit Bulls Continue to Capture Hearts

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Petey in a scene from 1931's *Fly My Kite*.

By Adam Goldfarb

The Little Rascals' Petey, Sergeant Stubby, and Buster Brown's Tige—all famous dogs, all pit bulls. Decades later, prompted by the indictment of

quarterback Michael Vick on dogfighting allegations, the same dogs have again captured the hearts of America—this time as victims of dogfighting.

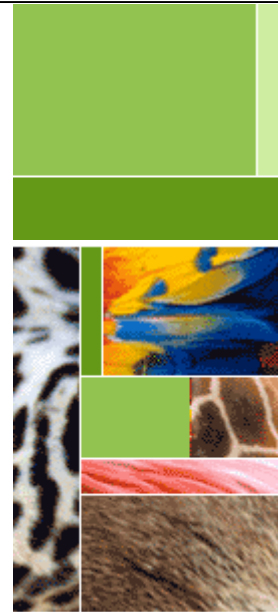
While thousands of pit bulls have been forced into the violent cycle of dogfighting, other pit bulls are beloved pets and public servants. The Humane Society of the United States has featured pit bulls before, like those [dogs affected by Hurricane Katrina](#), and [the search-and-rescue dogs of For Pits' Sake](#). And there are countless other heroic pit bulls who make the papers—dogs like Popsicle, the drug detection pit bull, and dozens of others who have saved their families from floods, fires and snakes.

Since Michael Vick's indictment, we've heard from hundreds of thousands of members concerned about dogs and outraged about dogfighting. But one story from HSUS member Angie Laurusaitis caught our attention in particular. Angie wrote us after getting a call to action on dogfighting:

It breaks my heart to hear the horrible stories and what these magnificent animals endure. I received an email from HSUS requesting assistance to voice my outrage to the NFL. I signed the petition without hesitation.

Angie then told us about her dog Daisy, who she adopted last year. Daisy is an ordinary pit bull, but she's an extraordinary friend.

I live in Toronto, Ontario, where last year, a pit bull ban came into effect. Countless numbers of pit bulls were surrendered to animal shelters



or released in the wild to fend for themselves.

I came to own a pit bull purely by accident. I received a call from an animal rescue agency, Adopt a Dog, Save a Life, which was desperately searching for a foster home for Daisy. Daisy was found abandoned last year, tied to a tree in knee-deep water, just east of Toronto. It was evident that she had recently given birth to puppies, but they were nowhere to be found. In spite of everything this poor animal had gone through, Daisy remained friendly and loving and craved human and canine companionship.



© Laurusaitis

Daisy, an extraordinary pit bull.

I was told the lady who originally agreed to foster Daisy reneged at the last minute. I asked if Daisy was good around dogs and cats. They didn't know about cats but assured me she was very social with other dogs. I agreed to help and told them to bring the dog.

A volunteer arrived with Daisy. As soon as I saw Daisy jump out of the car, I realized she was a pit bull. Needless to say, I was very apprehensive and wondered what I had just gotten myself into.

Daisy adjusted well in my home, and I became more attached to her as days went by. For the past six months of her life, Daisy had been relocated from one environment to another. I couldn't bear the thought of Daisy being uprooted again, so I decided she would stay with me as a member of our family.

I have never regretted that decision.

Daisy, Rusty (a Shepherd cross), four cats and two birds get along famously. Daisy has become a valuable member of our family. She is very attentive to my mother, who has Alzheimer's disease.

I would like to tell you a story about the picture of my dogs lying on the sofa with my



Daisy, with Angie's mom and second dog Rusty.

© Laurusaitis

mom. For some reason, both dogs were very attentive towards Mom that day. Where Mom went, so did the dogs. When Mom was resting on the sofa, one dog would lay down with her, but never both at the same time. I thought this unusual. I left for work. (I have a caregiver stay with Mom when I'm not home.)

While at work, I had an overwhelming feeling something was not right at home. I asked permission to leave early. When I arrived, I was not greeted at the door by excited barks. This concerned me. As I made my way through the house I found Mom lying on the bathroom floor. There was Daisy lying next to her. Mom had suffered a mild stroke.

I am happy to say, Mom recovered completely. To this very day, I am convinced both dogs sensed something was wrong and stayed by her.



Everyone who has come to my home is introduced to Daisy and showered with tail wags and big wet kisses from her. Visitors leave my home with a very positive attitude and have become pit bull advocates themselves. Daisy is a marvelous, good-natured, loving, friendly dog.

It's important to remember that every animal is an individual. Just like Angie, it's not uncommon for people to be initially apprehensive of pit bulls they meet. In fact, many potential adopters might overlook the pit bulls at their local animal shelter. When you pass by a pit bull, you might be passing by the best dog at the shelter.

If you're considering adding a new animal to your family, talk to your shelter's adoption counselors, and do some research on your own. Don't exclude a breed or type of dog just because of something you heard or read. That little blocky-headed dog with the goofy grin may be just the friend that you've been waiting for.

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