

Pit bull coverage

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I am very disappointed in how this daily newspaper [the Las Cruces Sun-News] has chosen to take the road of sensationalism and misinformation in its coverage of recent attacks by alleged "pit bulls," but the most hurtful misinformation was written by Dr. Gary Roemer in Their View (June 3).

If referring to American Pit Bull Terriers (APBTs) and not one of the other 20-plus breeds confused with pit bulls, it's obvious Dr. Roemer knows little about the breed's standard. He makes the dogs sound evil for being bred to hunt, yet many other powerful breeds are also bred for this task, which does not make any of them vicious or dangerous to humans. Conversely, APBTs were selectively bred to be docile to humans who use their power for their own wrongdoing. APBTs have higher passing scores with the American Temperament Test Society than many other beloved breeds (86.4 percent). Even those bred and raised to fight in the pit fail more than 80 percent of the time - at which time they are tortured and killed by dogfighters. Anyone remember Michael Vick and his buddy repeatedly body-slammng a dog to death? Who are the real monsters - the dogs or the humans?

Dr. Roemer suggests that these dogs are ready to attack and kill a human at any point, and that is simply wrong. Even the 1989 CDC report often quoted incorrectly ends by saying that breed alone is not the determining factor in dog bite cases. The National Canine Research Council finds that the media mislabels pit bulls more than 60 percent of the time in their accounts following fatal dog attacks to exploit those eye-catching headlines that play into people's irrational fears. Because of this, the media hurts more good people and good dogs than it helps anyone, and that's a shame.

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