From: Susan Bartoletti
To: dencc - City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pitbulls
Date: Monday, February 17, 2020 6:59:17 AM

To whom it may concern:
I have been asked to contact your office on behalf of policy regarding pitbulls. Please do me the courtesy of reading in an effort to understand and not judge.

The lie we are fed.

30 years ago, it was the Doberman. Before that, the German Shepperd. At one time, it was the Rottweiler. Now, for the last 20 years or so, it is the Pitbull. Who is driving the train of deceit and misinformation regarding the temperament and personality of any particular breed of dog? One word: Media.

If one follows or believes everything the media puts out, the Pitbull is currently the only dog on earth that is dangerous. Think about the last time you read an article about a Doberman mauling a child. Exactly. But 30 years ago, the Doberman, known for it's intelligence, trainability, and courage, was tormented by the media who claimed the dog to be a menace to society, and would likely viciously attack it's owners. Fact is, the Doberman is a loyal, family-friendly dog that only becomes aggressive if abused.

Beyond the Doberman, myths of the Rott (Rottweiler) include aggressive personality, untrainable, not to be trusted around children. To the contrary, Rotts are a calm, confident and courageous dog and takes it's time getting to know people, evidently displaying emotional intelligence as well. Rotts are affectionate, often following its owners everywhere. Yet, back in the day, the Rottweiler was sometimes falsely accused of horrible characteristics, likely based on it's appearance and size and the fact that like the Doberman, its coat is mostly black. (Another myth on an epic scale, 'black dogs equal evil). Perception is everything. Fact, dogs don't realize the color of their coat nor do they care, but people do and therefore black dogs are the least likely to be adopted. Fodder for a future story. Stay tuned.

German Shepards did not escape vilification either. Once feared to be aggressive and combative, they are now revered in society for their intelligence and temperament and nowadays, often hailed and praised for their skills in loyalty, rescue abilities and more.

Which brings me to the Pitull. If you give any credence to the media at all, and you shouldn't, you would believe the Pit possesses a mean and aggressive temperament, however, Pits rate higher than the general dog population in temperament tests. Another myth is that Pit Bulls have 1600 psi in jaw pressure. Busting this myth is, Dr. Lehr Brisbin of the University of Georgia who states: "To the best of our knowledge, there are no published scientific studies that would allow any meaningful comparison to be made of the biting power of vaious breeds of dogs". Yet, this false statement is repeated time and time again about this breed including that Pits lock their jaws, another untruth.

Fact is, the Pit is athletic, clownish, affectionate, and eager to please. Originally, the Pitbull was

bred to "bait" bulls and became known as a farm dog before being welcomed into the home because of their gentleness. In the early 1900's Pits were given the nickname of "Nanny Dog" due to their love of and loyalty to children. Look it up.

Here's the thing. Dogs, like people, often reflect the culture in which they inhabit. For instance, if a child is raised in an abusive home, that child may grow into an abusive adult. If a child is witness to neglect or abandonment, that same child will never trust an adult and will forever protect itself from pain and mistreatment. That being said, the dog, likely the most domesticated animal on earth, isn't born into this world as an aggressor or to be vicious. These traits are taught by humans who exploit the dogs sense of loyalty and love by abusing, baiting, and going out of their way to actually teach the dog, man's best friend, to attack. Yet, the dog, bears the blame for its reputation. Outrageous.

Obviously, any dog, domesticated or not, at the very bottom , is still an animal, and if provoked, will hurt a person, or another animal. True statement. But, there will come time when the media, after recognizing their attempts to ban the Pitbull from various communities, the park, other public places, conceivably even from adoption, will finally move on to another breed to torment, dare I say, 'hound', and destroy the otherwise stellar reputation of say, possibly, the Collie, the Golden Retriever, or God forbid, the Labrador. I pray for the day when people will learn to reason for themselves, do the research, and stop depending on the media to bring truth. That ship sailed long ago.

Thank you for reading.

Susan Bartoletti

Photo by Elijah O'Donnell on Unsplash

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