

# Most Dangerous Dog: Pit Bull Bans Raise Questions



Dana Kozlov ([http://cbs2chicago.com/bios/local\\_bio\\_274150856.html](http://cbs2chicago.com/bios/local_bio_274150856.html))  
Reporting

*(CBS) CHICAGO* Mention a pit bull these days, and many people will react with fear. The breed brings to mind a number of recent attacks on humans and some lawmakers are even calling for a pit bull ban.

But are they the most dangerous dog?

CBS 2's Dana Kozlov has the good, the bad and the ugly side of this controversial canine.

Wes Alicea breeds pit bulls. Apocalypse is one of his dogs, and Alicea insists his pit bulls would never hurt anyone.

"They are loving, loyal, friendly," he said.

But in the last two weeks alone, pit bulls have been responsible for three attacks on humans, including the vicious mauling of six people in Cary. Brooks Foley displays the tears he suffered at the jaws of those dogs. His 10-year-old son was left in critical condition.

"And they were going to kill me, that's were they were going to do," Foley said.

So what, if anything, about this breed makes them so dangerous?

"Genetically, these dogs can be, and have the ability to be, an aggressive animal," said Dr. Sheldon Rubin, chief of staff at Blum Animal Hospital.

In fact, the original purpose of the breed was to fight other dogs. Today's pit bull is actually a mix of the American bulldog with the Staffordshire terrier, making it very muscular and powerful. The result?

"As a breed that has been bred over the generations to be dog aggressive, they don't bite another dog just to show them superiority. They will bite until that other dog is down," Rubin said.

And when they bite a human Dr. Rubin says it will likely use its strong jaw to clamp down and not let go.

Animal activists say many pit bulls today are being raised as fighters for sport or weapons by gang bangers. But PAWS Chicago founder and chairman Paula Fasseas insists pit bulls are not vicious by nature.

"It's because of the people that are the guardians of them. The owners. They are totally irresponsible and they are not socializing them," Fasseas said.

Dr. Rubin and Wes Aliceas echo that sentiment, and stress the importance of strict training and socialization of pit bulls at a young age. Spaying or neutering is also essential.

"There has never been a known fatality, human fatality, by a dog that was fixed," Fasseas said.

Ultimately, they believe any dog can be dangerous -- if not deadly -- and any pit bull can be a good pet if raised properly.

"There are dogs for every type of person. If you are a humble person, not dominant enough, then you don't want a pit bull," Aliceas said.

Most animal professionals we spoke with are against any type of ban on pit bulls or any breed. But that is an ongoing debate right now.

Experts also stress the importance of researching a dog before adopting it. You can call your local shelter or vet for help in behavior testing a dog for any aggressive tendencies.