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Breed Specific Legislation

(date)

(TO:..insert name here)

(address)

(city, state,zip)

(FROM:..Your name)

(Your address)

(your city, state, zip)

(your area code and phone number)

Dear (insert name here):

In the United States, a vast but shadowy subculture of dog owners thrives, living in an underworld invisible to responsible pet owners and show-goers. For many decades the inhabitants of this subculture have been looking for the ideal "junk yard dog," a large ferocious beast that seems a major threat if not an actual menace. Equally faddish as the visible world of dogs, this underworld moves from breed to breed in its search of the canine suited to its warped dreams.

Years ago, the first I knew of these people, they were "into" German Shepherds where they stayed for about fifteen years before moving into Dobermanns. After that they got hold of Collies and Saint Bernards.

After a period of foundering, they conceived the notion of moving into Pitbulls.

Their modus operandi is always the same: First their top echelon buys "pet quality" pups from legitimate but novice breeders or obtain adults from animal rescue stations since pedigrees and registrations meaning nothing to them. They keep the animals chained or cooped up in back of the house and breed father to daughter, mother to son, sister to brother, with complete disregard. The first litters sell for seventy-five dollars per pup, but the next generation sells for fifty dollars, and the generations after that for thirty or thirty-five. Bitches are bred on every heat and shotgunned when they have whelping problems or become infertile. Usually three or four generations of such breeding suffices to guarantee that most of the specimens are atypical in the extreme, including temperament.

These unfortunate creatures are not fed correctly and receive little or no veterinary care. They are encouraged to behave savagely and even to attack on command. Of course such "training" borders upon the barbaric and serves only to destabilize an already iffy specimen.

When the underworld people got into Sheps and Dobes and Collies and Saints, they managed nearly to ruin those breeds . But when they got hold of Pitbulls, they got more, much more, than they had bargained for.

Pitbulls proved a lead-pipe cinch for the subculture to ruin in record time because their temperament, originally sound, is easy to spoil. It does not require physical abuse or maltreatment but nothing more than indifference from the owners and isolation from human love and companionship, an existence without human affection for long periods of time. The result: a vicious dog in the original sense of that term.

A Pitbull, even with a spoiled temperament, remains the most athletic and strongest canines, pound-for-pound, in existence, capable of almost unimaginable feats of power, endurance, and tenacity, feats far beyond the capacity of most mortal dogs.

When uncaring owners allowed such Pitbulls to roam free or get free, some of them did indeed commit social atrocities, that's true. But these were not well-bred dogs owned and raised and cared for by responsible citizens. Rather, they were canine sociopaths manufactured to design by that shadowy subculture, reflecting as though from a mirror its moral and ethical bankruptcy.

In response, the national media began its typical shark-feeding frenzy, its reportage always superficial, always error-prone, always sensationalized. And the duped public reacted predictably.

When I arrived in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1969, there was not a Pitbull in the city. In 1988, frightened owners turned in more than 400 Pitbulls to the Omaha Animal Shelter to be destroyed humanely -- but an estimated two thousand more were not turned in.

Now, in 1996, the "Pitbull menace" is long gone - it's over, kaput - and has been for five years or more although its image lingers on public memory.

The shadowy subculture has moved on and is in the process of ruining yet another breed.

It's moved into Rottweilers.

Sincerely,

(signature)