

# NCRRC

National  
Canine  
Research  
Council

*Preserving the Human-Canine Bond*

## Investigative Reports for Dog Bite-Related Fatalities

# 2009

## INTRODUCTION

Dog bite-related human fatalities have always been exceedingly rare, yet they can attract the kind of publicity that creates an impression that they are more prevalent than they actually are. The annual total of such fatalities has risen and fallen with no discernible pattern or trend, even though the US canine population has continued its steady increase. During 2009, the U.S. canine population topped 77 million, according to the American Pet Products Association. In 2009, there was one human fatality for every 2.5 million dogs in the country. By contrast, 15,241 human beings were murdered, which is equal to one violent human death for every 20,143 persons.

There were 31 dog bite-related fatalities in 2009.\* NCRC contacted officials on each case in order to obtain the most accurate and comprehensive information available. We have re-interviewed sources that the media has reached, and located others that they have not, among whom may be police investigators, animal control officers, coroners, veterinarians, health department officials, dog owners, and eye witnesses. We have obtained incident reports, bite reports, human and animal autopsy reports, summaries of judicial proceedings, and crime scene data and photographs. While not all, or even any, of these sources and reports may be available with respect to each individual case, our experience has shown that official reports often do not agree with news accounts and/or contain important information that was either unavailable or not of interest to reporters. Many cases involved extensive investigations by local authorities, and as such, important information relative to the dog(s), owner and/or victim was not available until the completion of those investigations.

We are issuing our 2009 final report only at the end of 2010 because we believe that our mission of preserving the human-canine bond obligates us to be as accurate about these emotionally charged incidents as we can, so that they are calmly, correctly and, therefore, usefully understood. Accuracy takes time.

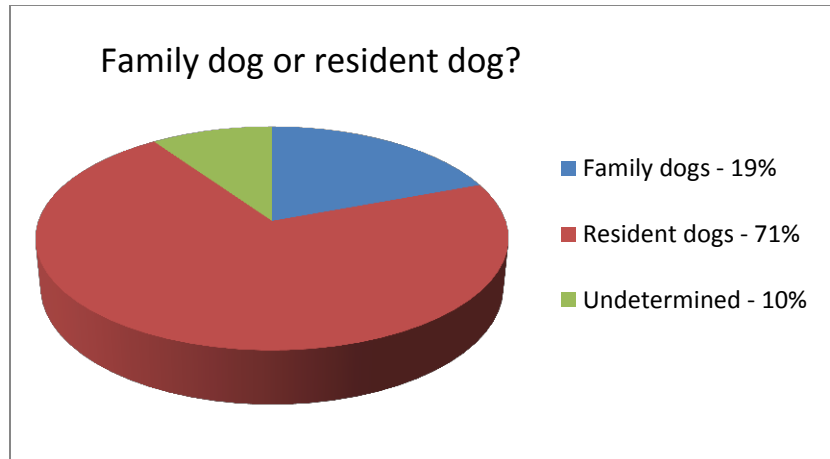
### Humane care, custody and control

The overwhelming majority of these isolated tragedies – 22 out of 31 – involved *resident* dogs, not family pets

Owners maintain the dogs we call resident dogs exclusively outside of regular human interaction: on a chain, in a kennel, in an isolated portion of the home such as a basement or garage, or in the yard. Some owners acquire the dogs for negative purposes, such as guarding, intimidation, protection, fighting, or negligent breeding. These owners only rarely permit the dogs to associate with people and other animals in positive, humane ways.

Dogs maintained as “resident” animals cannot be expected to exhibit the same behaviors and level of sociability as family dogs afforded the opportunity to learn appropriate behaviors through positive and humane interaction with people on a regular basis.

In 8 of the 22 cases of resident dogs, the owners had permanently isolated the dogs on chains.



In 26 of the 31 cases, the owners had failed to spay or neuter their dogs.

#### **Owner cruelty and criminality**

In 6 of the 31 cases, an owner and/or owner-parent was charged with a crime.

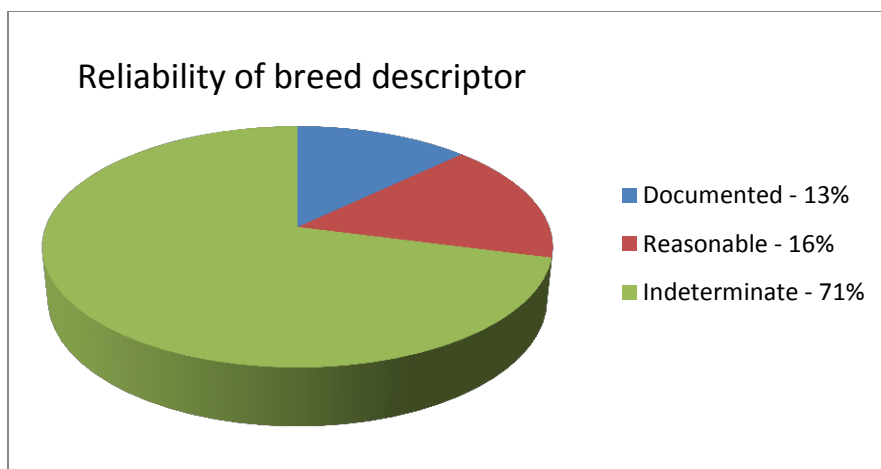
In 6 of the 31 cases, the owners had continuously subjected their dogs to serious abuse and neglect: keeping their dogs in frigid conditions with no shelter, allowing their dogs to become infested with parasites, or starving their dogs. One owner had chained his dog to a tree with a prong collar. There were no criminal charges filed in connection with these six cases.

#### **“What kind of dog was it?”: Reliability of breed descriptor**

Most of the dogs involved in fatalities in 2009, however they may have been described in the news, were found to be dogs of unknown pedigree. In nine of these incidents there is documentation (n=4) or other reasonable evidence (n=5) that the dog or dogs were pure-bred dogs. Six different breeds were identified in these nine incidents.

In the other 22 cases, it was either not possible to assign a reasonably accurate breed descriptor to the dogs involved, or the dogs were never located. In these cases the breed was classified as “indeterminate” since there was no documented or reasonable evidence provided by owner(s), authorities, or any other party to substantiate a breed attribution. # Any breed labels in news accounts could not be substantiated.

In any event, there is no scientific evidence that one kind of a dog is more likely to bite or injure a human being than another kind of dog.



## Conclusion

Dog bite-related fatalities are exceedingly rare. In 2009, 31 fatalities occurred within a human population of 308 million and a canine population estimated at 77 million. The interactions between dogs and humans are so numerous, complex and fluid that no one factor can possibly be considered, in isolation from any other factors, to be the cause of what happened. There is no scientific evidence that one kind of a dog is more likely to injure a human being than another kind of a dog. This is no evidence that, absent circumstances specifically associated with mating or maternal protectiveness, a dog being intact should be understood as a cause of aggressive behavior toward human beings. And for every dog that injured someone and who had been denied a positive human relationship, untold thousands similarly kept injured no one.

Dogs are individuals, and must be regarded as such. Further, each of these incidents represents a unique calculus of circumstance that we can never completely decipher.

Much that is inaccurate and misleading is regularly published about dog bite-related fatalities. We are issuing this collection of reports in the hope of encouraging in any future discussion a respect for accuracy and completeness, and because the more deeply one examines these incidents, the more likely one is to appreciate that their complexity and fluidity are most profitably reduced to one, simple, unchanging prescription. All dog owners have an unequivocal responsibility for the humane care (including proper diet, veterinary care, socialization and training), custody (including licensing and microchipping), and control of their dogs.

# # #

\*Four cases, which may appear in other compilations, do not satisfy the standard definition of a dog bite-related fatality, and are excluded here. A dog bite-related fatality is one where a human being died as a result of trauma, exsanguinations or avulsions attributable to dog bites. We have, therefore, excluded two cases in which a person died of infection days or weeks after suffering a dog bite, one in which an animal control officer died after

being knocked down by a dog, and one in which the medical examiner was unable to determine whether the bite wounds were pre- or post-mortem.

# In cases lacking documentation or other reasonable evidence of pedigree, if any photographs of the dogs were available, we submitted them to NCRC Advisor Amy Marder, VMD, CAAB. Dr. Marder is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine, and completed the University's first behavior residency. She currently serves as Director of the Center for Shelter Dogs at the Animal Rescue League of Boston. She is also a dog fancier, who showed Australian terriers.

# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** January 5, 2009

**Location:** Thomasville, Georgia

**Victim:** Cheyenne Peppers, 5-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Cheyenne periodically stayed at the home of her mother and her mother's boyfriend in Thomasville. On January 5<sup>th</sup>, Cheyenne wandered, alone and unsupervised, into the backyard where three dogs resided. She may have been playing on a trampoline.

While the media reported that "two of the dogs broke free of their chains" to attack Cheyenne, investigators determined that the dogs were never chained, and were loose in the yard at the time. The owner had tied two of the three dogs with ropes only after discovering the body of the child. He later explained to investigators that the dogs were only tied when they were being fed (see photo below).

One of the dogs was a heavily pregnant female. She gave birth to puppies less than 24 hours later.

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*The collar and nylon rope were used to tie one of the dogs when being fed.*

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained in yard

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One-three: The participation of individual dogs was not determined

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, pregnant (full-term); male, sub-adult, intact (offspring of the two adult dogs)

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: Female gave birth to puppies less than 24 hours later

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** The media reported the dogs were "pit bulls." However, NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner or authorities to substantiate the breed(s) of dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of all three dogs. NCRC submitted photographs to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed(s) of the dogs could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** January 11, 2009  
**Location:** Chicago, Illinois  
**Victim:** Alex Angulo, 4-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Within days after his birth, Alex Angulo was taken into the foster care system. Four years later, his fourth foster parent was a 77-year-old woman who lived on Chicago's South Side. Alex was primarily cared for by his foster mother's adult son, whom Alex called "uncle."

The "uncle" was using a snow blower in the front yard when Alex went into the backyard where two dogs were kept.

The media, neighbors and a Cook County Public Guardian commented the dogs appeared to be "big wild dogs, or scary, aggressive, menacing dogs." None seemed to have noticed that the dogs were visibly underweight and had no shelter from the freezing temperatures in the snow-covered yard in which they resided.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained in yard  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One-two: Participation of individual dogs not determined  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: Unknown  
Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog(s).  
Other: Visibly underweight dogs living exposed to frigid temperatures.



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**Breed attribution:**

Indeterminate

**Details:**

The media reported the dogs were Rottweilers. NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner or authorities to substantiate the breed(s) of the dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dogs involved in the incident. NCRC submitted the photographs to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed(s) of the dogs could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** January 15, 2009  
**Location:** Fort Worth, Texas  
**Victim:** Brooklyn Grace Milburn, 3-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** When Brooklyn Grace's mother left to go to the grocery store, the child was playing in her bedroom. Her grandfather was cooking dinner. Unseen by her grandfather, Brooklyn Grace wandered out into the fenced-in backyard. A single slat of the fence was broken, and a plastic table had been placed over the hole in the fence. Brooklyn Grace managed to maneuver past the table and crawled through the hole into the next-door yard where their neighbors kept a dog.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained mostly outside. However, the dog had a room off the house, which he accessed through a doggy door. Although the dog was separated from the family and main portion of the home, the room afforded him a comfortable place to sleep, along with air-conditioning and heat.

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.  
Other: Accident. An unforeseeable sequence of events.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Reasonable  
**Breed attribution:** Rottweiler

**Details:**

The media and authorities reported the dog to be a Rottweiler. NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed(s) of dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dog. NCRC submitted photographs to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that it was reasonable to identify the dog as a Rottweiler.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** January 19, 2009

**Location:** Hanover Township, Pennsylvania

**Victim:** Brianna Shanor, 8-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Because her mother could not provide for her, Brianna Shanor had lived for the past few weeks with an unrelated family. On the evening of January 19<sup>th</sup>, Brianna was outside with her guardian. She told him she was cold and wanted to go back inside. In the dark, Brianna headed back toward the house. A short time later, the guardian found Brianna's body inside an old camper that one of the chained yard dogs used for shelter.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: Dog considered underweight. Body condition score 2.5. Low body condition score especially notable due to the cold weather.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Conflicting breed identifications. Dog was reported to be a "mixed breed" or a "Rottweiler mix." County Dog Warden reported the dog did not conform to the standards of any recognized purebred and appeared to be a mixed breed dog of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** January 19, 2009

**Location:** Bourbonnais, Illinois

**Victim:** Olivia Rozek, 3-week-old female

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**Circumstances:** The family dog knocked down an unsecured gate and went into the bedroom where three-week-old twin babies were lying on a bed. The dog picked up one of the infants and carried her into the hall. The dog immediately dropped the infant in response to screams from the mother, but the infant died from her injuries.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: Dog maintained as household pet

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One of the two dogs in the house. Female dog did not participate.

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, neutered

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes: unsecured gate. Parents attempted to separate the twins and the dogs.

Other: Accident; babies new to the household.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Reasonable

**Breed attribution:** Siberian Husky

**Details:** Dog was identified by owner and authorities as a Siberian Husky. Dog had been adopted from a Siberian Husky rescue organization. NCRC obtained photographs of the dog involved. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concurred with the identification of the dog as a Siberian Husky.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** March 4, 2009  
**Location:** Mesa, Arizona  
**Victim:** "Baby" Rudolph/Ramirez, 2-week-old female

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**Circumstances:** The infant's mother, who also happened to be a police officer, left the baby in a low-lying bassinet while she used the bathroom. When she returned, she discovered that her dog had fatally injured the infant.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: Dog maintained as household pet  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: Yes: child momentarily left unattended.  
Other: Accident; baby new to the house.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Conflicting media reports alternately referred to the dog as a "Chow," a "Chow mix" and a "Chow/Golden Retriever mix." Animal Control reported the dog did not conform to the standards of any recognized purebred dog and appeared to be a mixed breed dog of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** March 16, 2009

**Location:** Rancho Mirage, California

**Victim:** Hill A. Williams Jr., 38-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Williams, who had a history of felony drug convictions, was attacked by one or both of the dogs he co-owned with his girlfriend. Animal Control officials suspect Williams may have been trying to get the dogs to mate at the time.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Unknown for what purpose, or how dogs were maintained.

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One or two: Male positively identified as an attacker. Not known if female participated.

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact (in estrus)

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Underlying heart condition also a factor in victim's death.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Owner, Animal Control and media gave conflicting breed attributions. The dogs were alternately described as "Bullmastiffs," "Bullmastiff mixes", and "Italian Mastiffs." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed(s) of dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dogs involved in the incident. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed(s) of the dogs could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** March 24, 2009  
**Location:** Wayne County, Georgia  
**Victim:** Dustin Elijah Faulkner, 3-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Two unsupervised children, 3-year-old Dustin and a 5-year-old neighbor girl, were crossing an open yard where a dog was chained to a tree. As they were passing near the dog, Dustin stepped on a stick and cried out. The dog broke free of the chain. The dog wore two collars, a flat buckle collar and a prong (pinch) collar, to which the chain was attached.

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*Prong collar dog had around her neck, which was attached to cable tied to tree.*

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain.  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Female, intact



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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No.

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: Dog was chained to tree by prong collar.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Reasonable

**Breed attribution:** Siberian Husky

**Details:** The owner gave a statement to investigators that the dog was AKC registered and that he bred and sold Siberian Huskies. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dog. NCRC submitted photographs to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that it was reasonable to identify the dog as a Siberian Husky.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** March 26, 2009  
**Location:** Luling, Texas  
**Victim:** Tyson Miller, 2-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Shortly after her release from 5 months incarceration on drug charges, Melissa Miller had given birth to Tyson. Following Tyson's birth, Miller had moved him and his sister into, and out of, at least 11 different motels or relatives/acquaintances' homes, in 4 different states.

On or about March 15, 2009, Miller moved two of her three children, Tyson and his 6-year-old sister Valerie, into the home of another acquaintance.

Sometime between 7:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on March 26<sup>th</sup>, Tyson wandered out of the home and into the backyard where dogs were chained. Melissa woke up a little after noon, and noticed Tyson was not in his bed. Another resident of the home found the boy dead near one of the dogs. He had been dead for some time.

Tyson's mother pleaded no contest to criminally negligent homicide, and was sentenced to two years in prison.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Female, pregnant

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: Yes  
Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.  
Other: In the previous eight months, the dog had been moved to four different locations. Each of her owners claimed they could not care for her.

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**Breed attribution:**

Indeterminate

**Details:**

The media reported that the dog involved was a "pit bull." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed of the dog. No photographs of dog were made available.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date of Incident:** March 28, 2009

**Death of Death:** April 10, 2009

**Location:** Imperial County, California

**Victim:** Gordon Lykins, 48-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Gordon Lykins was found severely injured in a drainage canal near his home in Winterhaven. He was able to tell paramedics that he had been attacked by dogs.

Firefighters responding to the scene were charged by a large pack of dogs and had to retreat to their vehicles for safety. The dogs were determined to have belonged to the man who lived across the road from where Lykins was discovered.

Lykins' injuries were so severe that doctors amputated both his legs and one of his arms. He succumbed 13 days later.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs allowed to roam.

**Number of dog(s) involved:** Large Pack (>10 dogs)

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Males, intact; females, intact. At least two dogs were pregnant at the time of the attack

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## **Other significant factors:**

**Criminal Charges:** No. Authorities failed to make an official determination as to which of the dogs participated, notwithstanding the report of firefighters who witnessed the dogs at the scene. Authorities took no DNA or saliva samples into evidence. Nevertheless, all of the adult dogs were euthanized.

**Unsupervised child:** N/A

**Other:** Large pack of dogs allowed to roam and breed with no control or management by owner.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Authorities reported the dogs to be mixed breed dogs. Photographs obtained by NCRC substantiate that the dogs were mixed breed dogs of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** March 31, 2009  
**Location:** San Antonio, Texas  
**Victim:** Izaiah Gregory Cox, 7-month-old male

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**Circumstances:** Izaiah was placed on a bed by his great-grandmother, Irma Barrera. Barrera claimed she went into the kitchen to warm up a bottle, and while she was in the kitchen, her two dogs attacked the child.

Barrera was later arrested and indicted for felony injury to a child, after authorities learned that her 7-year-old granddaughter had been hospitalized several years earlier after being attacked by the same dogs.

Barrera died of natural causes before the case went to trial.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained in yard, only occasionally brought into the home

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One or two: Participation of individual dogs not determined

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact

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## Other significant factors:

**Criminal Charges:** Yes; owner died before her trial

**Unsupervised child:** Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dogs.

**Other:** Dogs had a history of aggression - a serious attack by same dogs on another child.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** The media reported the dogs as "pit bulls" citing two sources: San Antonio Police Chief McManus, who stated the child died "at the hands of pit bulls," and Raymond Sanchez, described in news accounts as a neighbor, who stated, "I mean, they're huge. They're just not average dogs, they're big pit bulls. They

must weigh 150 pounds.” (Dogs of the breeds typically referred to as pit bulls are approximately one-half the reported size of the dogs involved, or smaller.) NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation that substantiates the breed(s) of dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of both dogs. NCRC submitted photographs to NCRC’s expert advisor who concluded that the breed(s) of the dogs could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** April 10, 2009  
**Location:** Morganza, Louisiana  
**Victim:** Michael Blaise Landry, 4-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Michael Blaise was playing in his yard and his mother was gardening nearby, when three dogs belonging to a neighbor ran over and attacked him.

The neighbor, who was an off-duty Deputy Sheriff with the Point Coupee Parish Sheriff's Department K-9 division, had released the dogs in order to clean their kennels. The dogs slipped through a section of barbed-wire fencing and into the Landry's yard.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Deputy maintained his dogs in outside kennels and used them for breeding  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** Three  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact; female, spayed

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: N/A

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Documented  
**Breed attribution:** Boxers  
**Details:** AKC Registered dogs

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date of Incident:** April 11, 2009

**Death of death:** May 11, 2009

**Location:** Garland, Texas

**Victim:** Barbara Chambers, 59-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Barbara Chambers was in her yard with two of her dogs. For unknown reasons, one of her dogs inflicted severe injuries on her.

When paramedics found Chambers, she was unresponsive. They transported her to the emergency room where she was revived. Chambers remained hospitalized and died one month later from "complications from injuries received in a dog mauling."

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: A show dog, maintained in home

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Rare case of a dog killing an established owner

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Documented

**Breed attribution:** Great Dane

**Determined by:** Evidence of owner and her prize-winning dog at shows.  
Owner/victim was active in Great Dane community showing her dog.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** April 13, 2009  
**Location:** Huron County, Michigan  
**Victim:** David Whitenack Jr., 41-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** David Whitenack lived in a camper that belonged to his friend Frank Levine. Levine was terminally ill. On April 2nd Levine was admitted to the hospital, leaving his three dogs on the property. On April 5<sup>th</sup>, relatives went to the property to look for some documents. They left three small automatic feeder bowls for the two chained\* dogs and one loose dog.\*\*

The family members did not return until eight days later, on April 13<sup>th</sup>. They told investigators they did not get out of the car because the three dogs had surrounded their vehicle and were acting aggressively.

Later that same day, two friends of Whitenack, Doug Ignash and Randy Franzel, went to the property to look for him, as they had not seen him for a couple of days. Ignash was attacked by the dogs and was only able to escape with the help of Franzel. They later found the body of Whitenack inside the camper.



*The barn floor and empty water and food bowls where one of the dogs was chained. The last time the dogs were reported to have been fed was on April 5<sup>th</sup>, **eight days prior** to the discovery of Whitenack's body. \*\**

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\*It was never determined how the two dogs that were observed chained on April 5<sup>th</sup>, got loose.

\*\*Contrary to media reports, there was no food found on site. Relatives later stated they assumed other people were feeding the dogs after April 5<sup>th</sup>.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained on chains and/or allowed to run loose

**Number of dog(s) involved:** Three

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Males, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Dogs had displayed serious aggression towards visitors. Dogs had been uncared for, and unfed for eight days immediately prior to the incident.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Dogs were referred to by media and authorities as "Blue Heeler / Australian Shepherd mixes." Investigators were unable to provide any evidence of the dogs' breed(s), nor were any photographs taken of the dogs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** April 22, 2009

**Location:** Eastpointe, Michigan

**Victim:** Leonard Lovejoy, 11-month-old male

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**Circumstances:** The child was reportedly standing on a bed with his parents nearby, when the family's dog attacked him. The father shot the dog with a .45 caliber handgun which he apparently kept loaded and nearby.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Unknown: No information available. As of December 2010, case is still open with the Eastpointe Police Department.

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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## Other significant factors:

**Criminal Charges:** As of December 2010, case is classified as an open investigation.

**Unsupervised child:** No

**Other:** Unknown

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** There were conflicting reports. Some news reports referred to the dog as a "pit bull," while Eastpointe Fire Chief Dan Hagen described the dog as a "pit bull mix." No further information is available. Case is open with City of Eastpointe Police Department.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** June 15, 2009  
**Location:** Rusk County, Texas  
**Victim:** Justin Clinton, 10-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Witnesses reported seeing Justin being dragged along the side of the road by two dogs. Justin was a frequent visitor to the home where the dogs resided. In a lawsuit filed against the dogs' owners, Justin's mother claimed he was skateboarding to the owners' home that fateful day.

Investigators are not sure if the dogs attacked Justin inside or outside the fenced enclosure in which they resided.

Criminal case still pending.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs primarily maintained in yard.  
Unknown whether dogs spent any significant time inside the home

**Number of dog(s) involved:** Two

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact (had puppies 3 months prior)

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## Other significant factors:

Criminal Charges: Yes: Owners charged with criminally negligent homicide

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Dogs had been acquired by present owners four months prior to incident

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Conflicting breed attributions were given by media and authorities. Among the many descriptions assigned to the dogs were "two pit bulls"; "a pit bull mix and an American Bulldog"; and "two American bulldog mixes." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or

documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed(s) of the dogs. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dogs. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed(s) of the dogs could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** June 27, 2009

**Location:** Johnston City, Illinois

**Victim:** Gabriel Mandrell-Sauerhage, 3-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Gabriel usually resided with his father, but on June 27<sup>th</sup> he was staying with his mother and her boyfriend in Johnston City. Gabriel's mother put him to bed around 7:30 p.m. When she checked on him at 8:00 p.m., he was not in his room. It seems Gabriel had pushed a screen out of the bedroom window and crawled into the backyard where three dogs were kept.

The media reported that one of the dogs was chained at the time. Investigators found no evidence of that. Also, contrary to the media reports of a neighbor claiming, "They've seen the dogs attack before," and that "she saw them kill another neighborhood dog last week," investigators found no evidence the dogs had been aggressive in the past.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained in yard

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One-Three: Participation of individual dogs not determined

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** 1 Male; 2 females. Reproductive status not known.

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dogs.

Other: N/A

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**Breed attribution:**

Indeterminate

**Details:**

Conflicting reports referred to the dogs as a "collie" or "collie mix," and "pit bulls" or "pit bull mixes," or "three mixed breeds." There was agreement among authorities that dogs were mixed breed dogs. Photographs of all three dogs obtained by NCRC substantiate this finding. None of the three dogs conform to the standards of any recognized breed and appear to be mixed breed dogs of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** August 10, 2009  
**Location:** Leesburg, Virginia  
**Victim:** Carter Ridge Delaney, 20-year-old, male

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**Circumstances:** Carter Delaney's brother owned two dogs that he could not properly care for, and asked their mother to keep them at her home. She already owned two small dogs and apparently was not totally receptive to the addition of Carter's brother's two dogs. Carter was alone in the basement, when it appears a fight broke out between his brother's two dogs (an intact male, and female in estrus) and his mother's small intact male dog. The small dog was killed, as was Carter.

---

**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs maintained in basement of home because owner could not care for them  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One or two: Participation of individual dogs not determined  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact; female, intact (in estrus)

---

**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: Two intact male dogs in basement with female dog in estrus

---

**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Media reported dogs involved to be "pit bulls." NCRC was unable to obtain any evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed(s) of the dogs. Photographs of the dogs are not currently available.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** August 15, 2009

**Location:** Oglethorpe County, Georgia

**Victim:** Sherry Schweder, 65-year-old female  
Lothar Schweder, 77-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Authorities believe Sherry Schweder had gone out for an evening walk on the rural road where she and her husband Lothar lived. She was attacked by a large group of abandoned dogs who lived on and near a neighbor's property. When Sherry did not return home, Lothar drove down the road looking for her. He apparently found her body on the road and got out of the car, at which point he was attacked. Both bodies were found lying near the car the next day.

A neighbor, Howard Thaxton, claimed he periodically fed the dogs. Thaxton recently had become ill and moved away, but stated that he had returned to the property every other day to feed the dogs.

Despite Thaxton's claims, NCRC's investigation revealed that the dogs were extremely malnourished and did not appear to have received even minimal amounts of food. All of the dogs were infested with parasites. Some also had open wounds infested with maggots.

---

**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Semi-feral, abandoned dogs

**Number of dog(s) involved:** Large pack, > 12 dogs; exact number of dogs unknown

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Males, intact; females, intact; and female with puppies

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Double fatality by large pack of dogs. Extreme animal abuse. Dogs abandoned without resources.

---

**Breed attribution:**

Indeterminate

**Details:**

Consensus among authorities that all were mixed breed dogs. Photographs of the dogs obtained by NCRC substantiate that the dogs were mixed breed dogs of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** August 15, 2009  
**Location:** Hardy County, West Virginia  
**Victim:** Justin Kummer, 3-day-old male

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**Circumstances:** Justin Kummer had only been home from the hospital for a few hours. Justin's mother was feeding the infant and left the room to answer the phone. When she returned to the room, she found Nila, one of the family's dogs, "acting weird" near the baby. The second dog, Harley, also entered the room and began "acting weird." As the mother turned to push Harley away from the infant, Nila grabbed the infant. Justin died before reaching the hospital.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: Maintained inside the home as a pet.  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Female, intact

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**Other Significant Factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: The infant had only been in the home a few hours.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Reasonable  
**Breed attribution:** American Pit Bull Terrier  
**Details:** Evidence of dog's pedigree and photographs obtained by NCRC reasonably substantiate breed attribution.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** September 27, 2009

**Location:** Orange County, Virginia

**Victim:** Jasmine Deane, 23-month-old girl

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**Circumstances:** Jasmine had wandered outside, unsupervised, to where her family kept a dog chained. Virtually all media sources reported the dog to be a "family dog," with one media source identifying the dog as the "family's longtime pet pit bull."

NCRC's investigation revealed that the dog had been isolated from humans for most of his ten years, either in the basement in the winter, or chained outside in the summer.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain, or in basement.

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: Dog maintained for 10 years in semi-isolation.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Media reported the dog was a "pit bull." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities to substantiate the breed reported in the media. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dog. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed of the dog could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** October 23, 2009

**Location:** Delhi, California

**Victim:** Colten Smith, 17-month-old male

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**Circumstances:** Colten Smith wandered, unsupervised, into the backyard of his babysitter's home where a dog was being kept. Some media sources reported the dog belonged to the babysitter; however, it was later revealed that the babysitter had been watching the dog for her future in-laws for a week prior to the incident.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Unknown

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male; reproductive status not known.

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: The dog had been in residence for less than one week.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** The media alternately referred to the dog as a "pit bull" or a "pit bull / Akita mix." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner(s) or authorities that substantiate the breed of the dog. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dog. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed of the dog could not be reasonably determined from the photograph.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** October 28, 2009  
**Location:** Prescott, Arkansas  
**Victim:** Matthew Clayton Hurt, 2-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Two-year-old Matthew Clayton wandered, unsupervised, four blocks from his home into a yard where multiple dogs were chained. He approached one of the dogs.

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*Location where dog spent his life chained.*

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain.  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: Yes. Matthew's caretaker has been charged with endangering the welfare of a child.

Unsupervised child: Yes. And child unfamiliar to the dog.

Other: N/A

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Media reported the dog to be a "pit bull." NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner or authorities that substantiate the breed of the dog. NCRC did obtain photographs of the dog. Photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed of the dog could not be reasonably determined from the photographs.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** November 5, 2009  
**Location:** Union County, Mississippi  
**Victim:** Destiny Marie Knox, 16-month-old female

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**Circumstances:** Destiny followed her babysitter into the woman's trailer. The door to the home was open, as the babysitter was unloading groceries. One of the dogs chained in the yard slipped out of its collar and entered the home.

Neighbors reported they "never saw the dogs off their chains."

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: One of a number of dogs maintained in yard on chains.  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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## Classification of Incident:

Criminal Charges: Presented to grand jury - Returned "No Bill"  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: N/A

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Media reported the dog to be a "pit bull." NCRC was unable to substantiate breed attribution. Union County Sheriff's investigator refused to release photographs, or any other information on the case.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** November 24, 2009

**Location:** Hardin County, Kentucky

**Victim:** Karen Gillespie, 53-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Karen Gillespie had gone for a walk to photograph an old one-room schoolhouse near her home. When she did not return home by 7 p.m., her husband, Stephen Gillespie, reported to the police that she was missing. Her body was found the next morning.

After determining that she died of head injuries caused by a dog, authorities seized a dog owned by Howard Miller, who lived on a property adjacent to where Gillespie's body was found. Authorities later determined a second dog, also owned by Miller, had been involved.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs allowed to roam in rural area

**Number of dog(s) involved:** Two

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Males, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

**Criminal Charges:** Yes, pending; Miller has been charged with misdemeanor violation of County vicious dog ordinance.

**Unsupervised child:** N/A

**Other:** The dog had previously bitten a Census Bureau worker.

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Conflicting breed attributions given by owner, media, law enforcement and animal control: Dog #1 was a "stray" found by the present owner, and was alternately referred to as an "American Bulldog," a "Boxer," or a "Boxer mix." Dog #2 was reported to be a mixed breed dog.

NCRC did obtain photographs of Dog#1. The photographs were submitted to NCRC's expert advisor who concluded that the breed of the dog could not be reasonably determined from the photographs. Authorities and owner were in agreement that Dog # 2 was a mixed breed dog of unknown origin and genetics.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date of Incident:** November 27, 2009                      **Date of Death:** December 4, 2009  
**Location:** Monroe County, West Virginia  
**Victim:** Lowell Bowden, 70-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Lowell Bowden was taking a walk on November 27<sup>th</sup> when he was attacked by as many as five of his neighbors' loose-roaming dogs. Mr. Bowden was hospitalized with severe injuries. He died on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Further information is not available. As of December 2010, this case remains an open criminal investigation.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dogs allowed to roam in rural area  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One to five  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Males and females, intact.

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: Yes. Charges of involuntary manslaughter and harboring a vicious animal have been filed against four dog owners/neighbors.  
Unsupervised child: N/A  
Other: Unknown

---

**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** All of the dogs who may have been involved have been referred to as "pit bulls," without citing a source. There is no documentation regarding the breed or breeds of any of the dogs.

This is an open criminal investigation. No other information is available.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** November 29, 2009

**Location:** Flora, Illinois

**Victim:** Rosie Humphreys, 85-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Rosie Humphreys was walking her small dog when a neighbor's dog broke loose from his chain and attacked Humphreys and her dog. Both Humphreys and her dog were killed. Authorities determined the dog was able to break loose of his chain due to a faulty "D" ring.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Dog maintained in yard on chain

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Although characterized as a "pet" by authorities, the dog was a resident dog, permanently maintained on a chain in the backyard.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Documented

**Breed attribution:** American Pit Bull Terrier

**Details:** ADBA registration

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** December 12, 2009

**Location:** Norfolk, Virginia

**Victim:** Theresa Ellerman, 49-year-old female

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**Circumstances:** Theresa Ellerman was visiting friends. They had all been drinking and having a good time. Sometime after midnight, Theresa went into the kitchen and sat on the floor. The family's dog came into the kitchen and approached Theresa. Although the owner was also in the kitchen at the time, her back was to Theresa and she did not witness what transpired; but the dog bit Theresa once in the neck. She died from asphyxiation.

---

**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: Dog maintained inside the home

**Number of dog(s) involved:** One

**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, reproductive status unknown

---

## Classification of Incident:

Criminal Charges: No

Unsupervised child: N/A

Other: Victim intoxicated; single bite by dog

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**Breed attribution:** Indeterminate

**Details:** Media reported as an "Alaskan Malamute," without citing a source.

NCRC was unable to obtain evidence or documentation from the owner or authorities to substantiate the breed of the dog. No photograph of the dog was available.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** December 12, 2009  
**Location:** Pasco County, Florida  
**Victim:** Dallas Walters, 20-month-old male

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**Circumstances:** Dallas was with his parents, attending a birthday party at his great aunt's home. The family was in the living room and Dallas was standing near the sofa as his mother was feeding him. When Dallas bent down to pick up some food that had dropped on the floor, a dog that had previously been chained in the backyard, came from behind the sofa. It is not known how the dog got loose from his chain. It is believed he entered the house when the family opened the door to let in some air.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Resident: Newly acquired dog maintained in yard on chain  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, intact

---

**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: Newly acquired dog kept tied to fence in yard.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Reasonable  
**Breed attribution:** Rottweiler  
**Details:** Evidence of dog's pedigree obtained by NCRC reasonably substantiates breed attribution.

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# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

**Date:** December 22, 2009  
**Location:** Cape Coral, Florida  
**Victim:** Liam Perk, 2-year-old male

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**Circumstances:** Liam's father was in his son's bedroom, along with one of the family's two dogs. His father stated that Liam ran towards the open bedroom door when Lloyd, the family dog, turned and bit Liam on the neck. Tragically, this single bite proved to be fatal.

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**Family dog or Resident dog:** Family: Dog maintained inside the home  
**Number of dog(s) involved:** One  
**Sex, reproductive status of dog(s):** Male, neutered

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**Other significant factors:**

Criminal Charges: No  
Unsupervised child: No  
Other: Extremely rare case of a well maintained, family dog killing an established family member.

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**Reliability of breed attribution:** Documented  
**Breed attribution:** Weimaraner  
**Details:** Dog was reported to NCRC as the offspring of a registered sire and dam.

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