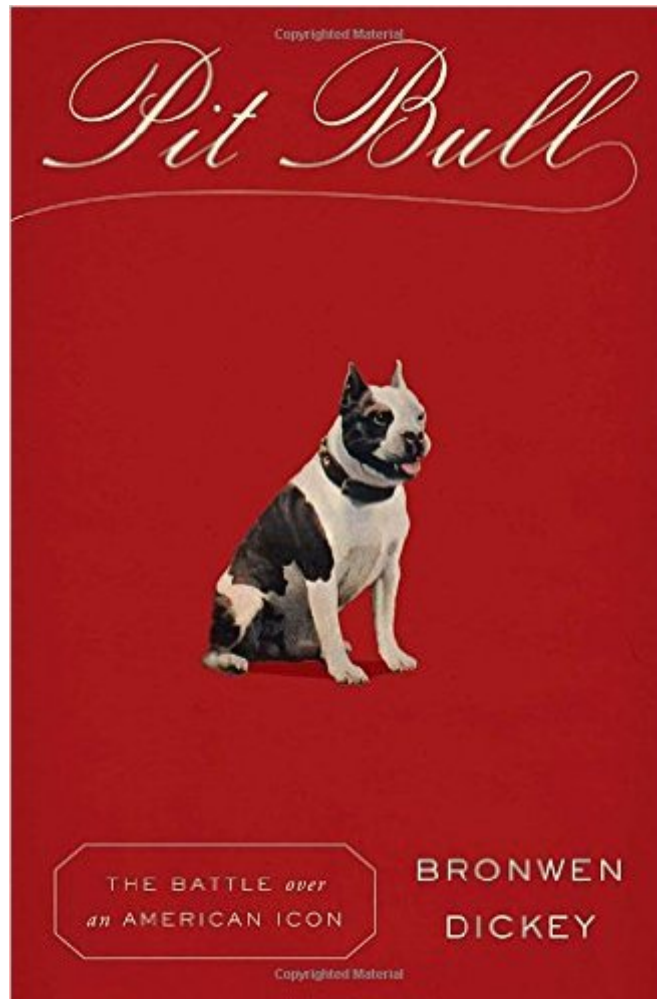


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# Pit Bull: The Battle Over An American Icon



## Synopsis

The hugely illuminating story of how a popular breed of dog became the most demonized and supposedly the most dangerous of dogs—and what role humans have played in the transformation. When Bronwen Dickey brought her new dog home, she saw no traces of the infamous viciousness in her affectionate, timid pit bull. Which made her wonder: How had the breed—beloved by Teddy Roosevelt, Helen Keller, and Hollywood's "Little Rascals"—come to be known as a brutal fighter? Her search for answers takes her from nineteenth-century New York City dogfighting pits—the cruelty of which drew the attention of the recently formed ASPCA—to early twentieth-century movie sets, where pit bulls cavorted with Fatty Arbuckle and Buster Keaton; from the battlefields of Gettysburg and the Marne, where pit bulls earned presidential recognition, to desolate urban neighborhoods where the dogs were loved, prized—and sometimes brutalized. Whether through love or fear, hatred or devotion, humans are bound to the history of the pit bull. With unfailing thoughtfulness, compassion, and a firm grasp of scientific fact, Dickey offers us a clear-eyed portrait of this extraordinary breed, and an insightful view of Americans' relationship with their dogs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Note that a raft of one-star "reviews" showed up within hours of the book's publication. These people were sent over from an anti-pit-bull hate group on Facebook, which is urging its members to "swarm" . They have NOT read Bronwen Dickey's book. The Facebook page is explicit: "Here's the deal: We don't need to read it to understand the book's underlying theme." Well, here's the real deal:

you DO have to read it. That's how books work. If you haven't actually read something -- carefully -- then no: you are not in a position to understand anything about it. Much less review it. I received an electronic galley a couple of weeks ago, and read it with joy. I assure you that it's by far the most careful and rigorous treatment of the subject to date; it's also an undeniable work of literature -- a gift to the genre -- and genuinely entertaining. I wonder whether any of the kindhearted people leaving fake reviews will ever get around to glancing at the book itself. Apart from everything else, they might be disappointed by how evenhanded the work is: Ms. Dickey spends a fair bit of time with voices on both sides of the pit-bull debate. Her own conclusions favor science -- she doesn't side with the extremists (who can be found, unfortunately, in both camps). It's a thorough, level-headed and intelligent treatment of a fraught topic; I expect it will remain the definitive work for some time.-----Note: the hate group has just changed its name -- they used to call themselves "Pit Bulls and Amputees." They're now hiding behind the innocuous title, "Pit Bull Public Safety Education and Advocacy." Their campaign of harassment against Ms.

\*THIS\* is how a non-fiction book is supposed to be written. It is extremely clear when reading the book the amount of research that went into it. Not just searching google and looking for user comments or reading news articles, but actual legitimate research, interviews and more research. This book not only delves into the history of the breed, the reputation of the breed, but looks at modern, peer reviewed, scientific research papers that have been performed to show the major discrepancies between reality and "hysteria". She's done a wonderful job of delving into the psyche of humans in the modern world and why we are so prone to buy into hysteria, while discounting all facts that show us the error of our ways. I agree with other reviewers about the context of this book being more about people than dogs. It uses the topic of "Pit Bulls", which isn't even a specific dog breed, to explore people and try to make sense of some of our more senseless ways. I just finished this book and couldn't be more pleased. I have to say, this is one of the best non-fiction books I have read. As an aside, scary but also eye-roll worthy, I got up this morning and someone had sent me a good write-up regarding the book since they knew I was reading it. It's about the author and the craziness she has had thrown her way since writing the book: You can find it by googling "How Writing About Pit Bulls Led to Death Threats, Online and IRL". It's on lithub. I've noticed several other articles throughout the last few weeks speaking about the crazy experiences book stores and this author have had from the same small group of people. It would be ridiculous and laugh worthy, if it wasn't reality.

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