



F46 Fatal Dog Mauling by Presa Canarios

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After this presentation, the participant will have an increased understanding of the analysis of multiple bites inflicted by animals in fatal attacks.

In recent years there seem to be more media reports of fatal mauling of humans by various breeds of dogs. Usually the victims are children and the attacking dogs are commonly Pit Bulls or Rottweilers. From time to time the forensic odontologist is consulted for an analysis of the bite injuries. This presentation will review the 2001 fatal mauling of an adult female by two adult Presa Canario dogs in San Francisco. There will be a brief review of two other fatal northern California attacks, the death of a young boy by two Rottweilers and the fatal attack of a female jogger by a mountain lion.

In January of 2001, a woman was returning home to her apartment in an affluent area of San Francisco. As she was about to enter her apartment she was suddenly attacked by her neighbors' adult Presa Canario dogs, one male and one female. One of the dogs' owners, a female, who was returning from a walk with the dogs, attempted to restrain the animals. Due to the large size of the dogs (approximately 130 lbs.) the dogs overpowered both the victim and their owner. Eventually the owner was able to move the dogs, one at a time, back into her apartment. The victim suffered multiple bite injuries over most of her body with the severest bites in the head and neck area. Police and paramedics attempted to administer life-saving measures. The victim died due to insanguination. One animal control officer responded and attempted to sedate the male dog with multiple tranquilizer darts. The dog continued to be combative thus the officer could not safely remove and transport the animal. At this point, one option that was discussed was for the S.W. A.T. team to shoot the dog prior to removal. Eventually the dog became sufficiently sedated to be removed by a trained police dog handler and the animal control officer. Reportedly, the victim had earlier encounters with the two dogs. Subsequent police investigation revealed earlier aggressive behavior by the dogs. Reports indicated that two Pelican Bay State Prison inmates, who were also members of the Aryan Brotherhood, originally owned the dogs in northern California. The dogs had been bred for the purpose of being sold for fighting. The owners, at the time of the mauling, were a married couple, both attorneys, who shortly following the attack formally adopted one of the inmates.

The Chief Medical Examiner of San Francisco County and the lead investigators contacted the author to examine the bite mark patterned injuries on the victim. The author also examined the two dogs. The male dog was immediately euthanized. The female dog was not destroyed until 2002. The author photographed and took dental impressions of both dogs and subsequently a bite mark analysis was performed. The maxillary intercanine measurements were 60mm for the male dog and 50mm for the female. The conclusion was that the male dog inflicted the bites on the victim's head and neck. It was not possible to include or exclude that the female dog bit the victim.

The two owners were indicted for manslaughter and second-degree homicide and were eventually tried and convicted in a Los Angeles court. Subsequently, the trial judge threw out the second degree murder conviction. At the time of submission of this abstract San Francisco prosecutors planned to appeal the judge's ruling.

This presentation will review the bite injuries on the victim and also review similar type bite injuries in the Rottweilers and mountain lion attacks.

Dog Bites, Presa Canario, Rottweiler