

# A NEW YORK TRAGEDY

Statistics and general analysis of dog bite-related fatality cases are often a sterile accounting of traumatic events and fail to convey the true degree of negligence and the terribly tragic circumstances often experienced by both the victim and the dog.

The following case occurred in New York State and is cited to convey, on a personal and emotional level, the preventable tragedy found in the overwhelming majority of cases of dog bite-related fatalities. In this classic example, it is very clear how negligent and abusive owner behavior resulted in dire circumstances for both the child and the dog.

The photo below is only one of dozens taken by the detective who investigated this case. It is worthy of note that the majority of the evidence photos taken were not of the dog involved in this incident, but of the immense pile of scrap metal and junk where the dog was chained.



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## A BOY AND HIS DOG: A NEW YORK TRAGEDY

### The Boy:

- A two-year-old boy is bitten in the throat by his father’s guard dog.
- The father faults his two-year-old son for crawling too close to the dog’s food bowl.
- Two months later, the boy’s visiting grandmother is attacked and bitten by the same dog. She requires treatment at the local hospital.

- The father is charged with owning a dangerous dog and owning an unlicensed dog.
- Child Protective Services begins to monitor the father, child and home to ensure that the boy is not exposed to the dog, which is still on the premises.
- Three months later, the boy is found alone and unsupervised, crawling in high grass near the shore of a lake which borders the rear of the backyard. The father says he is unconcerned as the “lake is not very deep.”
- During the following months, the guard dog is seen chained outside, but then disappears.
- Three years later, the father obtained a new “family” dog.

### **The Dog:**

- At five weeks of age, the tan, male pup is sold to a man - call him Owner #2 - for \$100.00.
- One month later, Owner #2, complains the 10-week-old puppy is “hard to housebreak” and gives the dog to a new owner, Owner #3.
- Owner #3 keeps the young dog in his basement and often “forgets” to feed him.
- After a couple of months the dog is given to Owner #4, who feels sorry for the dog that is neglected and often left without food.
- Owner #4 only keeps the dog a few months before giving the dog to Owner #5. Owner #4 says she is moving and “cannot” take the dog with her.
- Owner #5, the father in question, chains the dog to a large scrap metal heap.

### **Boy Meets Dog:**

Owner #5 had the dog for less than a week when he allowed his son to go out and feed the dog, which is still chained to a pile of scrap metal. Fifteen minutes later, the boy is found dead, lying amid the junk, entangled in the dog’s chain. The food bowl is found nearby, upside down and empty.

Two days later, Owner #5 had the dog killed. He later pleads guilty to misdemeanor charges of endangering the welfare of a child and is sentenced to one year conditional discharge - he is already on probation for another offense -and is prohibited from owning a dog for one year.

**The news stories about this tragedy all described the dog as the “family dog.”**