

Barbara Kay: Cesar the dog whisperer should whisper the truth

[National Post](#) - Wednesday November 28th, 2012

I see that famous dog whisperer Cesar Millan will appear at Toronto's Bell Centre Sunday as part of the 19-city Canadian tour of his show, "Trust Your Instincts." Tickets to hear him pontificate on the nature of dogs run from \$37.50 to \$113.50. Perhaps the higher-priced tickets entitle you to share a bowl of kibble with him after the show.

According to the Montreal Gazette, Millan will be bringing a few dogs with him to illustrate his wizardry, including a Chihuahua, but curiously enough, he will not have his "trusty pit-bull," Junior with him, a favourite since the death of his all-time favourite pit bull, Daddy in 2010 (a tragedy that had him entertaining thoughts of suicide!).

Millan has probably done more to spread the canard of pit bull trustworthiness as a pet than any other single person. Pit bulls and other genetically-related fighting dogs are high-risk animals, demonstrably – the statistics on these animals are insurmountably inculpatory – not trustworthy, neither with other animals nor with people. That is undoubtedly the reason Millan did not bring Junior along for the show. He undoubtedly did not want the bother of keeping Junior isolated from the other dogs and monitoring his behaviour every second that he was in contact with people. Pit bulls are bred for impulsive aggression, and it is as natural for them to attack other dogs as it is for greyhounds to run after rabbits on a track.

But Millan's fetish for fighting dogs has him bruited the same reflexive, but illogical nonsense that all pit bull advocates spout. Millan says that bans of pit bulls are "prejudicial" and miss the point: "It's just like an anti-Mexican or an anti-gay law."

No, Cesar, it isn't. Let me explain. Mexicans and gay people are not born in kennels as part of a litter. Their parents were not selected by a "breeder" to produce them because they were fine examples of a certain physical conformation and certain temperament. It was not predictable when you were born that you, for example, would be a dog whisperer or that a gay person would be gay.

Stay with me here, Cesar. When you breed a greyhound to a greyhound, you will get a litter of dogs that are "fast" when they run. When you breed a border collie to a border collie, you will get a dog that has a "herding" instinct. Still with me? Now we're going to breed a "fighting dog" to another "fighting dog" and you know what we're going to get? Yes! A "fighting dog."

What do we mean by that? Well Cesar, you yourself know what the traits of a fighting dog are. I quote you: "Yeah, but this is a different breed...the power that comes behind the bull dog, pit bull, presa canario, the fighting breed – They have an extra boost, they can go into a zone, they don't feel the pain anymore. ... So if you are trying to create submission in a fighting breed, it's not going to happen. They would rather die than surrender. If you add pain, it only infuriates them...to them pain is that adrenaline rush, they are looking forward to that, they are addicted to it... That's why they are such great fighters." You go on to say: "Especially with fighting breeds, you're going to have these explosions over and over because there's no limits in their brain." Wow, is that what you want in a pet? A dog that has "explosions over and over" in its brain?

Please, let us do away with this language of "prejudice" and "discrimination" and "stereotype" when we speak of dog breeds. The whole point of breeding animals is to "discriminate" and to create "stereotypes." Pit bulls were created by human beings to be fighting machines. They are individuals in their various personalities, but in their "instincts," they are what they were bred to do. And what pit bulls were bred to do is to attack and hang on like grim death.

Dog breeds are human inventions, not a species. Dogs are consumer items, not human beings that can feel bad when they are banned. The name of Millan's show is ironic. If you really "trust your instincts" with a bit of intelligent research backing them up, you will realize that Cesar Millan is defending the indefensible. If you can only love a pit bull, you're no dog lover.

bkay@videotron.ca

