

Woof, Woof

Surviving a Dog Attack

As a result of a vicious dog attack here in Victoria not to long ago, I decided to do some research on what I could share with my students should they be confronted with a dog attack. Although there was lots of information on the Internet about this topic (some urban myth), I decided to personally speak with three experts in the field; Sgt Jim Simpson (an ex K-9 handler with our department), and his wife Erin who is a professional civilian K-9 trainer (including protection work) with many many years of experience, as well as one of our animal control officers here in the city, and this is what they had to share with me, combined with some information that I found on the Internet, which they confirmed as desirable:

- 1) Although when faced with a threatening dog our first instinct is to run, this is something that we do not want to do, why???? , Because it will cause the dogs prey drive to kick in thus further inviting an attack.
- 2) Do not talk to the dog in a way that will reveal your own anxiety or stress/fear (i.e nice doggie, it's okay, that's a nice puppy) this will often add fuel to the fire. Instead, remain very calm; appear confident or better yet intimidating. Do not provoke, but present yourself as a force not to mess with. If the dog challenges, challenge back. If the dog continues to move towards you, move at him aggressively shouting "no", "sit", "down", "go home". All commands that most dogs have heard and that may work to your advantage. By moving towards the dog you are far better prepared for an attack than if your were running away.
- 3) If the dog does not move forward, move away from a threatening dog, walk backwards for an extended distance, and then turn and walk in the direction that you were intending, constantly checking over your shoulder to ensure the dog is not following.
- 4) If you can grab an improvised weapon such as a stick, use it like a spear rather than swinging it like a bat, due to the fact that many dogs will be able to evade an arcing swing. Target the throat and ram it in if possible. Also some dogs will retreat if you bend down as if picking up a stone and going through all the motions of throwing it at the dog or actually do throw one at him.
- 5) If you have time to remove a jacket or sweater don't wrap it around your arm, but keep it in your hands to throw over the dogs head and face as they attack. Another option for a jacket was to unzip it, open the jacket out with both hands, (making yourself look much much bigger) and again move aggressively towards the dog thus becoming the attacker.

- 6) If the dog latches on, use a weapon such as EDC knife (cutting across throat) or strike the dog across the bridge of the nose, but if you can't do either, really work your thumb and fingers around the dog's throat and squeeze, you can cut off their air supply and cause them real stress
- 7) Most, but not all, dogs that are showing aggression, especially if hackles are up, are actually much weaker than they appear and will back down if abruptly challenged. If the dog is a genuinely strong dog, which will not be "scared" off, then one must ENGAGE in the fight. Stop thinking about escaping and think about overpowering taking on the attitude that if someone's going down, it WILL be the dog.

Darren

A Follow up:

A part of my research for the above posting was to actually quarry for a police dog (100 plus pounds of goal oriented teeth and muscle);

- Several times wearing a full bite suit,
- Several times wearing just a bite sleeve, and
- Several times the handler placed a special type of muzzle on the dog where it could not bite me, but still allowed the dog the ability to attack (me not wearing any bite suit)

Even though I was protected from the dog via a bite suit or bite sleeve, Survival Stress Reaction and most of its effects to the body kicked in upon the dog being sent in to attack, but like any other reality based training, the more familiar I got with how the dog would attack, the better I was able to manage SSR to some degree. Some of the things I empirically experienced:

- When a dog that size hits, it hits like a freight train and unless you have a good foot base, you will likely be knocked to the ground. Thus another reason not to run away from an attacking dog
- When the dog takes hold, it will shake and tug violently not unlike a shark (this is one reason why I now call police dogs land sharks)
- If running away, the dog will usually go after the legs and or buttocks, but if facing the dog it will usually take the closest arm. Again another reason to not run away, and if facing the dog, to keep your strong side back thus protecting your strongest attributes/tools
- Going after the eyes was challenging at best to do, due to the violent shaking and tugging actions that the dog WILL make. I found it easier (but still very

challenging) to after the eyes if the dog took an arm, but if it took a leg , hitting the top of the nasal bone was the only viable target

- If the dog broke hold, it would immediately re-engage the closest target it could sink its teeth into until the handler gave the command to out.

After speaking to the experts, I learned that most dogs are not goal oriented and attacked trained, and it is because of this fact that the recommendations in my first posting will unlikely work on most breeds of dogs. To emphasize the points of being aggressive and looking bigger, our ERT team leader has shared with me that there has been a number of calls that they have attended where there was supposed to be a viciously trained attack dog (including Pit Bulls), but upon entry, just making lots of noise and being very aggressive was enough to send all these dogs (up to this point in time) to high tail it out of Dodge with their tail tucked between their hind legs.

If, however, you are faced with a professionally trained protection dog that is goal oriented, they will engage with rage no matter how much noise you make, or how intimidating or big you make yourself look. In fact, these types of dogs are specifically trained to ignore these factors through operant conditioning. Thank God these types of dogs are few and far between. Most dogs will attack from a fear base rather than a confident base thus the reason for my original posting.

Darren

Ps: some of the B***sh*t being passed of as defences against an attacking dog that I found on the Internet are pure fantasy (ie wrap your legs around the dog and squeeze). This became even more apparent after having a real dog chew on you like a milk bone. Food for thought, excuse the pun !!!!!