

# First Indiana dog fighting conviction

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From the dark side of the street comes news of the conviction of an Indiana man on dog fighting charges. But his arrest has inspired activists to expand their efforts into other counties to stop this horrendous "blood sport."

And then there is Athena (pictured above), a pit bull in Indiana who represents all the best her breed can be, luxuriating in the attention of schoolchildren, teaching them kindness to animals. Athena's job is to be the Unconditional Love Dog, for the [Unconditional Love Foundation](#) (ULF), a humane and animal welfare organization.

Jill Dolon, co-chairwoman of the Muncie-Delaware County Dogfighting Task Force and president of ULF, said Tyson Carpenter was the first person convicted at a felony level in Delaware County. She said she "hopes this is the beginning of the end of the useless cruelty of training dogs to fight each other so people can bet money for the sake of gambling and entertainment."

Carpenter, 20, entered a guilty plea and is on electronic home detention for 18 months and not allowed to own dogs during that time period.

Police arrested Carpenter in April and Joseph Keating, 18, after they received a tip he and another man had staged dog fights. Keating is scheduled to go on trial in December.

Members of the task force were there when the men were arrested. Karen Gibson, Muncie Animal Shelter Superintendent and task force co-chair, and Muncie Animal Control Officer and task force member Bob Patterson removed the dogs from the home.

"The task force helped make this arrest possible because we started to educate the public about dog fighting as well as who to report suspicious activity to," Jill said.

She added she was pleased with Carpenter's sentence, especially since she also is president of one of the few groups in Indiana that will take pit bulls out of shelters.

"If we are ever to return to the days when the pit bull was valued as a family pet, as it was in the 1930s and earlier, we have got to educate people about the breed and wipe out these dog fighting rings. I wish there would be more positive pit press. I'm a firm believer in 'judge the deed not the breed.' Dangerous dog laws are the answer not breed specific legislation. I have never and will never support breed specific legislation," Dolon said.

The Unconditional Love Foundation (ULF) and the Dogfighting Task Force are engaged in a community awareness campaign about the problem, using posters and postcards. They are offering rewards of up to \$2,500 for animal fighting tips that lead to arrest and conviction.

"This is a cause in search of champions, and we would gladly share information on how we started our task force with other people. We'd like to see these task forces working with law enforcement and the courts across the country to end this nightmare," Jill said.

For more information about the Muncie-Delaware County Dogfighting Task Force contact Jill at [StopDogfighting@aol.com](mailto:StopDogfighting@aol.com).

*Article by Barbara Williamson. Best Friends Animal Sanctuary*