



# Biting Back

When a dog sinks its teeth in, attorney Ken Phillips goes for the throat

**D**og bites man; that's not news. Man, bitten, retains Ken Phillips; now that's news—bad, bad news for the dog's owner.

Phillips, 48, a lawyer in Los Angeles, is interested in just one kind of client—the kind with bite marks. The deeper, the better. “I don't do your average dog bite,” he says. “I do serious, disfiguring injuries.”

And there's plenty of call for his services: 4.7 million dog bites each year in the U.S., 800,000 of them serious. “I talk during career days at lots of schools,” says Phillips, whose Web site, [www.dogbitelaw.com](http://www.dogbitelaw.com), gets hundreds of hits a day. “Too many kids come up afterward, point to a scar and tell me that it's an old dog bite. Invariably their parents did nothing, because the dog belonged to someone they knew.”

Since 1991 Phillips has handled more than 500 cases and brought home awards as high as \$300,000, most paid by insurance companies.

Phillips, who shares his L.A. home with his wife, executive recruiter Cecile Munoz, six rabbits, a cat and fish, insists he doesn't hate dogs. He even offers tips for dog owners who don't want to see their premiums soar or their homeowners' policies canceled: “If your dog displays aggressive tendencies, hook up with somebody—an obedience trainer or, better yet, an animal behaviorist. Keep your dog on a leash if it's off your property. And if you want your family to be safe, don't buy a guard dog, buy a burglar alarm.” ●

“There's a direct relationship,” says Phillips (with Cheyenne), “between bad owners and bad dogs.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE LABADESSA