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The escape of Alexandria Griffin-Heady's pit bulls was foreseeable, both because of the flimsy construction of all wire crates and because of the laws of behavior. The discussion below comes after the Yuba County District Attorney announced that he will not pursue criminal charges against Griffin-Heady. [Part of the DA's reasoning](#) included that a jury would not find that the "manner" in which the two younger pit bulls broke out of the wire kennel would be "foreseeable." (See [related post at DogsBite.org](#) that also examines this issue.)

The crate problem

[None of these wire crates](#) will hold a determined dog. In order to make them light enough for the owner's convenience, the wire is kept light. This means it's easily bent. The various clips and catches are also designed for owner ease, which makes them easy for dogs to figure out. Escape from these crates is such a common problem that dog forums and YouTube are full of discussions about it. Dogs big and small try various tactics until they discover a way out. Many escape by [simply nosing at a crack](#) until they bend a door, a corner, or the top open. They squirm out [without unlocking the door](#) or otherwise actually opening the crate.

Some dogs figure out how to [completely disengage the front](#) from the rest of the cage, flipping it down so they can get out. Some even collapse the whole cage. If a dog can't get the front or a corner to open, [it'll eventually try the top](#). Dogs easily learn to chew through zip ties too. Some types will even chew at the welds until something cracks open enough to worm out. This is so widely known that [advertisers use it to sell their sturdier cages](#):

*"Your strong dog refuses to stay in the wire dog crate. We call these dogs Escape Artists. No matter what you do, they will still find a way to get out of their dog cage or crate while you are not at home. First, they escape through the door. Then, when you fix that, they find a corner to escape through. I had a customer tell me that their dog was outside her dog crate when they returned home but there was no evidence of where she got out of her crate ... Many strong dogs will "push" a wire crate until something snaps then they simply walk out. If this happens you should know that buying another wire crate will end in the same way. You need one of our truly indestructible strongest heavy duty dog crates ... **Our next category is the "Chewer"**. You know, the dog that will not stop chewing until they have popped the welds on the wire crate and manage to get their head through. I have had many customers relate stories of coming home to a bloody dog who got their head through the wire but couldn't get it back inside the crate. Then there are the vet bills for the dental work. It goes on and on. Not a happy sight." - DownHomePets.com*

Escape is a common discussion topic at pit bull chat forums. Sometimes they include illustrations of how flimsy these wire cages are. [Here's an example](#). The photo at the top of the discussion shows how easily the front bends away from the cage top. Also, several posters mention how zip ties don't work. Some pit bull owners openly acknowledge, "[You cannot cage a pit who doesn't want to be caged](#). They can and will get out of literally anything." Look up "pit bull escapes crate" on YouTube. It seems incredible that Griffin-Heady, as an

active pit bull advocate and [YouTube participant](#), would have been unaware of all this. In addition, the fact that she had a zip tie on the cage top indicates that they'd escaped via the top before.

The laws of behavior

If a behavior once -- just once -- succeeds in attaining its goal, the animal can be very persistent in trying again and again until the goal is reached. If the behavior that succeeded the first time doesn't work, the animal will try out other behaviors. A dog has discovered that a sit gets it a treat. The next time, the owner ignores the sit. The dog then tries pawing the owner. It tries sticking a nose under a hand or arm. It whines a bit. It brings a toy. It barks. It has learned that its behavior can get it what it wants, so it tries out all kinds of behaviors. At some point, one of the alternative behaviors gets the dog what it wants. The dog has learned that persistence and varying tactics pay off. Competent trainers use this behavioral law all the time; it's one of the main things behavior modification is based on. This is exactly what is going on when a dog that has once escaped a crate persistently tries other tactics to get out again. This can go to extremes. A dog that has once -- just once -- escaped a cage can be so sure it'll succeed again that it seriously wounds itself in trying other tactics. There are only two ways to know if you can safely contain a dog in a crate: 1) The dog is trained such that it doesn't mind being crated and never even tries to escape; 2) The dog is so securely contained that it never has a success -- not even once -- in escaping.

Escapes without unlocking door

- Boxer escapes without unlocking door:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVaKoOoRAsw>
- Boxer escapes without unlocking door
<https://youtu.be/UPNMbLqjHik?t=1m10s>
- Beagle escapes without unlocking door:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3YR_DfnYpE
- Retriever escapes without unlocking door:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ptBmYXM-o>
- Greyhound escapes by bending door:
<https://youtu.be/EPDB31YYj-c?t=4m30s>
- Pit bull escapes by bending corner open:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI4nduJLfRQ>
- Pit bull escapes by bending (not unlocking) door:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sif7gxR3xDQ>
- Boxer escapes with bottom latch still locked
<https://youtu.be/OqRbkGdJmAw?t=5m>

Escapes by disengaging front of crate or collapsing whole crate

- Pit bull type mix escapes by disengaging whole panel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGJ2EjwQPMs>

- Husky escapes by disengaging whole panel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uq4560LOErU>
- Boxer escapes by disengaging whole panel
<https://youtu.be/S5IbLRKkzug?t=3m30s>
- Medium-sized escapes by disengaging whole panel
<https://youtu.be/etHWSSLhqr4?t=1m>
- Small dog collapses entire cage
<https://youtu.be/e-03OnyBiyw>

Escapes by breaking through top or unlocking top door

- Pit bull escapes via top of cage (putting something on top of the cage doesn't help): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leW79c75ZvY>
- Dog escapes through top door of crate
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_FUTHxQUm0
- Medium-sized dog escapes through top of crate
<https://youtu.be/jdfuP1uvs5s>
- Small dog unlocks top door (shows if a dog can't open the doors, it'll try the top of the cage): <https://youtu.be/vYWCmutECU8>