



## Buying A Personal Protection Dog

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You can call it whatever you would like but it is still the same thing. A guard dog, personal protection dog, protection dog, estate dog and the list goes on and on. In essence we are speaking about a dog that is trained to protect you from those who want to harm you and one who is flashy when obeying your every word. You say it and he does it in an instant. At Wolfsbane K9 we often refer to our Belgian Malinois as the Navy Seals in the canine world due to the endurance, intelligence, willingness and difficult training they must go through to be qualified for our program.

Many years ago people would have never thought of paying high dollars for such a canine companion but the times have changed. Home invasions with violence attached are becoming more prevalent in some areas and people are looking for ways to protect themselves and their family. More than 6 million people report being stalked in the USA each year and in some cases it leads all the way to murder.



Our dogs are worked in a variety of situations. We start with suit work as you see Chad Hill demonstrating here. Once the dogs excel at this we will move to hidden equipment and many training scenarios.

If you do a search online you'll see dozens of websites from sellers all over the world that offer these dogs. Some are cheap and some are expensive in price. In fact some are astronomical in price fetching as much as \$200,000 or more. This of course is more than some homes costs or a kid's entire college tuition and then some. That is not the norm and only comes perhaps once in a lifetime if you are lucky. We don't price dogs that high and therefore we'll never sell one at that price but that is not a priority at our kennel.

Most of the kennels you'll see have dogs from \$10,000 to about \$100,000 and dogs in this price range sell everyday. Let's take this from the ground up. A more realistic average cost for a top dog is \$45,000 to \$70,000. Kennels who really sell dogs won't usually negotiate on pricing and if one offers this right up front you should beware of possible problems. If the kennel offers a lower price you should ask them why they are doing it.

### **Who buys this kind of dog?**

You might think that only rich people who own private jets and homes with 12 bathrooms pay this much for a dog. But, actually people from all walks of life buy these dogs and one thing that ties them all together is their desire for a protector. And, if you need a protector (or think you do) you most likely have a true fear of something or somebody that leads you to that conclusion. Home invasion types of crimes are on the rise but that should not be the only factor you consider when you buy a dog.

Most people who buy a dog trained to attack on command have already had issues in which they felt at risk. Perhaps they have regular robberies or maybe someone is stalking them. Those would be just two of the reasons why they feel a large, powerful and expensive dog would be the ultimate in security for their situation.

One of my first questions when a client calls is why do you think you need a dog like this? I need to hear them tell me in their words what they need protection from. Some might say this is personal and none of my business but how can I match you with a dog unless I know the details of why you want one? We might have several dogs to fit their needs or we might not have one at all. It is only through conversation that we can determine this. In some cases we can take a dog in training and customize him for a given situation. However, dogs are not like cars where you can just add the

options you want. Some dogs seem to learn everything while others will only learn certain things. A qualified trainer must decide on what a dog can do.

I don't like to waste a potential client's time or get their hopes up about a dog I know that I do not have. In the dog business you'll run into a lot of dogs known as washouts. These are dogs that started training to be a protection dog, police K9 or something similar and couldn't make it. Maybe they are easily scared or perhaps a hip problem is noticed with hard training. Either way, you don't want to waste your money on a dog like this. You are buying someone else's trouble and nobody wants to do that knowingly or not.



You will get stopped by admirers everywhere if you have a Belgian Malinois like this boy. Many clients comment not only on the learning capabilities of our dogs but also the beauty.

People who do have substantial wealth do buy highly trained dogs but so do average people who need what only a highly trained dog can offer.

### **The Puppy Myth**

Many people call us and ask if we can sell them a puppy and know it will be trainable to do protection work. The short answer is No. After so many years of dealing with dogs and testing puppies you do get a sixth sense for it. However, to guarantee that an 8 week old puppy will have what it takes to go through training to be the equivalent of a Navy Seal in the dog world is foolish and anyone who knows dogs will tell you that.

A good percentage of dogs will wash out (term for a dog being dropped from the program) because of any number of issues. A true protection dog

is an elite animal in mind, body and spirit. If you are buying a puppy and plan on doing an intense training program just remember there are no real guarantees. If someone tells you otherwise, keep looking.

### **The Dangers of Buying a Personal Protection Dog**

As far as owning a personal protection dog there are few if any dangers involved as long as you buy the right dog from the start. The problem for most people is that they don't know much about this type of dog and can't make a good decision. This is similar to buying a used car with no warranty. You know what you want the car to do but you don't know a lot about cars. Therefore you must take the seller's word as being truthful. You end buying a car and within 2 days problems start to arise and you have nothing to fall back on. Get everything in writing.

There are literally hundreds of people selling dogs but only a handful have quality dogs with a reputation for offering the best and backing it up. I hear horror stories frequently from people who clicked on a website, picked a dog out for \$5,000 and sent the money. Weeks later the dog arrived and was not even close to what they were promised. Then they call the guy who sold them the dog and can't ever get a straight answer on why he lied to them. If you could really buy a trained dog for \$5,000 nobody would be selling them for 20 times that much because they would never sell a dog. Every buyer would be going to the cheaper place for the same quality. That place doesn't exist.

I called a kennel in Europe several years ago to see how



Vecna is a puppy we sold to a happy owner in Ohio. Many wonder about his beautiful color and want to know if they can get a puppy of their own this color. We have dark colored puppies in almost every litter.

they did things. I had heard such bad things about them I just had to know if it was true. I called on the premise that I was potential buyer looking for a fully trained German Shepherd and I needed it for \$4,500 including shipping. The owner called me back in a short time and sure enough he had just what I needed and could send it right away. He wanted me to wire transfer the funds to his account. This guy I had spoken to for 5 minutes on the phone really thought I would send him \$4,500 to buy a dog I hadn't even seen a picture of so far.

Sadly people do this and they get ripped off. Remember, people in this business lie frequently so don't become a victim. Get a written agreement that spells out everything. I don't make it a practice to call other kennels but I had to do research to see how things really were. I wasn't shocked and I wasn't pleased. Unless you import dogs for a living you shouldn't even consider doing it for the dog you want to buy now.

Once you pay the money is gone and you will never get it back. At least with American based kennels you have a chance in court if it goes that far.

### **Do Not Buy The Hype or Media!**

There are many places to buy a dog and each kennel uses their own tactics when it comes to marketing. Some are low key and others are flashy readily offering a list of credentials and media in which they have been featured.

Media coverage should really mean nothing to you when it comes to buying a dog and here is why. Most magazines, newspapers and blogs are always looking for a new story and nothing is better than a good human interest piece involving pets. These places will often come knocking and looking for a story. In some cases if you buy an ad they guarantee you a story. This is easily manipulated if one has money to buy expensive ads because they will get the story.

Another kennel might have a better dog but the world may never know about it. And, once the wheel starts turning more and more media outlets will do stories about the business. But, how does this have anything to do with a dog's performance? It simply doesn't. Just because a kennel has massive amounts of articles about them doesn't mean they have good or bad dogs so please don't be confused here. Just use your common sense

and research all avenues before buying a dog based on hype. Buy your dog based only the dog you are looking at and nothing else.

It's common for kennels to make claims about how many certified, professional, dog trainers they have on staff and two or three vet techs. That may all be fine and well but remember somebody has to pay these people and in the end that is you. Just like any business the cost of doing business is passed on to the customer. A smaller kennel with fewer staff members can sell you a dog that is as good or better than many larger ones at a fraction of the cost. Shop around and look closely before you buy.

Many kennels will state that they are DEA, ATF, FBI or whatever agency certified. So what? Unless you are buying a dog to look for bombs or narcotics this means nothing at all to you. If you want a true personal protection dog buy it from a protection dog specialist and not a Jack of all trades.

### **Do Not Buy The Pictures**

Perhaps you are scanning the web and you see a dog you fall in love with based on his photos or description. Maybe the dog is the breed you want, the exact price you need and is readily available. But, step back and take time to be sure you are getting the right dog and not just a dog. Some kennels will try to sell you on the first dog you mention before they even get a sense of what you need. Ideally you'll end up with the dog that has the looks and ability to suit you. If you are buying a personal protection dog the first and foremost guiding factor is that the dog can and will guide you.



Rocky is a KNPV PH1 titled protection dog and he brings powerful skills in his defense of his family. Like most properly trained Belgian Malinois he never gives up on the fight.

### **Don't Be Fooled by Add On Items**

There are only a few kennels who do this but if you run into one you should be running in the other direction. Here's how it works. You inquire about a dog and get a price of \$15,000. You agree to purchase the dog and arrive to pick him up.

The kennel staff starts teaching you how to work with your dog and you ask what must you do to get him to search the house. They tell you that the dog doesn't do that but it can be added for \$5,000. You would have to be buying your dog from a car dealership to get more add on items. It now seems that the \$15K dog has gone all the way up to \$35K.

Now the pleasure of getting your new friend has been tainted by greed. We had a client who told us this is what happened when he and his girlfriend bought a dog from a well known kennel. And one of the trainers even told him the dog knew how to do these things already but the owner was shaking him down for more money. Disgusting!

### **What can a dog really do for me?**

A fully trained protection dog can't save you from all of the dangers that could come your way. Anyone who tells you the dog can handle every problem you might encounter is lying. The place where your dog will be the most useful is at home of course. As long as you give the dog the run of the house and let him work he can do a lot to keep you safe. For the average person having a human body guard is not feasible. You have to have someone living with you and going where you go all the time. And of course that kind of service doesn't come cheap. Movie stars and politicians might need that kind of service but for most of us it would never happen.

Over the years many convicted criminals have been questioned about how they choose homes to target for robberies or home invasions. One of the things almost all of them list as a negative factor is a home with a large, barking dog inside. This is common sense even to a criminal. If you enter that home you don't really know what that dog will do to you.

If you can't see inside you don't really even know what you are up against. Since people like this are typically not picky about which house they break into they will always choose the one without the dog. Chances are very

high that your dog will never have to do anything except bark and that is great.

There are situations where you might need to use your dog as the weapon he is trained to be and provide some backup support. Assuming you are at home and someone does break in they might have a gun or knife. Guns and knives do kill dogs just like they do people. But, if that dog's attack gives you an extra 2 or 3 minutes to grab your firearm or call 911 it could save your life. The fact is when the police are dispatched they still have to get to your location and that takes time. Any time the dog can buy you could save your life. And, as far as giving up I can only say that our dogs will not give up until they simply have no life in them.

Not long ago a video surfaced online from some parents. It was actually recorded with the baby camera monitoring system. They of course had this installed to watch over their newborn. What they saw would chill any parent to the bone. A man had come into their home in the night and was moving silently around as he robbed them of some valuables. But, it was watching him in their baby's room standing over her crib and whispering her name that was too much to take. If this family had one of our dogs this scenario would never had happened guaranteed.

A well trained, personal protection dog can also travel with you on short trips to town or longer on vacation. Our dogs are trained to ride well and of course the obedience will be impeccable no matter where you are with your dog. If someone attempts to harm you just let your dog go to work.

### **What kind of dog should I get and how old should it be?**

When we speak about personal protection dogs we are talking about adults who have been fully trained to do the job. These are not washout dogs and they have no health issues. We are speaking about dogs that will be in the 2 to 4 year old range in general.

When we import a dog that is trained and fully titled in Holland it is KNPV PH1. This means the dog has the most advanced training you will find no matter where you look. The dog has been certified as ready to work by the Royal Dutch Police however they do not buy all of the dogs available and we use our contacts to find truly exceptional K9s for our program.



We also work with dogs in all Ring Sports (mainly French Ring) and have dogs titled at the highest level. French Ring is a sport and type of training that is very suitable for protection dogs. If you want great on and off leash obedience a French Ring dog may be for you.

Once we get the dog at Wolfsbane K9 we'll start training him to be the best at personal protection dog work. Most of this is socialization to the surroundings and conditions in America. We'll let him stay indoors with us, take him for long rides, expose him to large groups of people and the list goes on.

As far as breeds go there are a few that can be good personal protection dogs but only two that we consider to be exceptional. I will not write about the pros and cons of each breed as there are hundreds of pages online where you can find comparisons. A note on that; Don't believe everything you read on the Internet because half of the people dispensing advice have no experience.

We began dealing in the Belgian Malinois and in particular the KNPV titled dogs after thinking carefully about which dogs had been the best for us over time. They truly are super dogs. A couple of simple things that have drawn clients to us seeking a Malinois would be their tolerance for heat and less shedding than a German Shepherd. People like German Shepherds because they are well recognized as a guard dog and tend to develop more of a territorial area naturally.

No matter which breed you search for be sure to keep this tip about kennel ads in mind. Many places will put things in their ads or on their website that are catch phrases such "KNPV bloodlines" or "IPO III" but they are not describing the dog you are looking at. They are throwing in terms to help search engines find their ad or site. Once you are there you'll quickly see that these terms do not apply to the dogs for sale. The terms apply to the dog's ancestors from generations back. Be sure to get the level of training and exactly what to expect in writing before you pay a penny.

### **The annual cost of protection.**

When it comes to age you need to understand something upfront. If you really do intend to use a dog for personal protection and can afford it, buy the adult. You know exactly what you are getting with an adult. If you buy a

puppy make sure you buy it from a kennel noted for true working line dogs. Also note on a puppy you will not know what you are getting until all of the training is done.

A Belgian Malinois has an average lifespan of about 12 years. One must consider how long the dog can be of use though as a working dog in protection. Just like humans, canines age and become less active in the later years. If your dog lives 12 years he'll most likely be workable until around the age of 10. Consider that he might be 3 years old when you get him and you have 7 working years with you.

If you pay \$30,000 for the dog it means his "salary" is \$4,200 per year. You could never get a human body guard for such a low annual price. For a person being stalked or living in fear for any reason \$4,200 per year seems very low to have 24 / 7 alerts and protection. Add in his food and vet bills at about \$1,000 per year and still at \$5,200 you have the finest protection you will get plus you have a real friend / companion.

### **The Shocking Truth**

At the time of this writing there is a big bunch of hoopla about the use of electric collars used in dog training. Some have launched a war on trainers who use these calling them "cruel" and "not needed." In our humble opinion when an e-collar is used correctly there is nothing cruel about it.

In addition the collars are probably more humane than what some poor dogs used to endure such as whips, sticks and boots to the ribs. None of that was ever needed but e-collars are needed because it helps correct severe issues at the very second they happen such as a dog chasing cars.

The electric collar has changed the way most trainers develop their training program. Using the collar correctly helps move the dog along through the training at a faster pace. There is nothing wrong with that however many kennels and trainers send clients home with an e-collar for controlling a \$75,000 dog. That is for lack of a better term simply STUPID.

Once a dog is trained they must perform anywhere, with any distraction and without an e-collar. Some say the collar is just a backup but that doesn't fly well with me. In reality it is another excuse for incomplete or poor training. Don't buy a dog that has been trained exclusively using an electric collar.

*Every dog we sell is fully guaranteed for health and performance.*

If you have questions or comments please contact us.

**Visits to our kennel are by appointment only.** We'll be happy to have you so please let us know when you want to come.



*Wolfsbane K9 is a small family owned business who has trained dogs for 40+ years and the Belgian Malinois has been our exclusive breed for more than 10 years. The business serves elite clients worldwide. Let's get started with your new protector. Call today at 423-914-2408.*

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