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## Article: Thurswell, Chayet & Weiner Files Suit in Wayne County Circuit Court - Pit Bull Attack Results in Highland Park Woman's Death.

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SOUTHFIELD, Mich., July 23 /PRNewswire/ -- In response to a pit bull attack that led to a local woman's death, Gerald Thurswell, a senior partner at the Southfield based law firm, Thurswell, Chayet & Weiner, filed a suit against the City of Highland Park and Marcus Fitzgerald on Thursday, July 22, 1999, in the Wayne County Circuit Court, Judge Harwood.

Thurswell represents the family of Frankie Higginbotham. Ms. Higginbotham was attacked in Highland Park by two pit bulls at the Beam home September 22, 1998. She died shortly after the incident as a result of being mauled and bitten.

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## Woman killed by pit bulls

HIGHLAND PARK, Mich. (AP) — The fatal mauling of a woman by two pit bulls was the first such death in metropolitan Detroit in more than 10 years, a Michigan Anti-Cruelty Society official said.

Wayne County prosecutors were deciding whether to bring criminal charges against the 19-year-old owner of the dogs, one of which was shot dead at the scene of the Tuesday night attack. The second dog, and another one taken from the scene, were destroyed at the Anti-Cruelty Society.

Police did not disclose the name of the 44-year-old victim. But she was identified in today's editions of the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News as **Frankie Higginbotham**.

Police said the victim had gone to a neighbor's house to ask for a cigarette. While standing on the porch, the dogs charged out the door without warning, dragged the woman into a yard and mauled her, Lt. Larry Beller said.

Neighbors tried to free the woman from the dogs while at least one witness called police. Officers arrived seconds later and found the dogs still attacking the woman, Beller said.

"One of the dogs had the lady by the neck," he said. "All of her body was quite torn up."

The victim was pronounced dead at Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital, Beller said.

A Wayne County Medical Examiner's Office investigator refused Wednesday to reveal findings of an autopsy, deferring to police. Beller said the woman likely died of extensive neck injuries.

The owner of the home where Ms. **Higginbotham** was attacked was caring for the pit bulls while her son was jailed on drug charges, Beller said.

"There are a number of possible charges, and we really can't comment on what those charges might be," Assistant Prosecutor Kevin Simowski said. "We really don't know yet until we get a good handle on where the police investigation is. Hopefully, that'll be this week."

The mother of the dogs' owner said the animals were not used for fighting. But Beller and Simowski said any evidence that the dogs had been trained to attack and did so, causing a death, is a felony carrying up to 15 years in prison.

Between 10 and 20 serious dog bites occur monthly in metropolitan Detroit, but Ms. Higginbotham's death was the first of its kind in more than a decade, said Mike Killian, the Anti-Cruelty Society's director of investigations.