

## DEVIANTS

### Turning Pets into People

The Earl of Cranbrook feeds his pet bats on a special mixture of egg yolk, cream cheese and banana. He says, "I keep the bats for about three months, then let them go." When the late Jayne Mansfield tried to smuggle her two Chihuahuas into England, she won the sympathy of the pet-fancying British public by clutching the animals to her celebrated chest and proclaiming, "They appeal to my mother instinct." Ronald Reagan, finding that he was getting on badly with his mongrel, put himself and the dog through a \$250 course of psychotherapy at a Beverly Hills canine funny farm.

Such incidents abound, lively as rabbits, in *Petishism: Pets and Their People in the Western World* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston; \$5.95). Author Kathleen Szasz tells of the great Dane that came to its owner's wedding in top hat and, of course, tails; of the New York City dog whose owner listed him in the phone book, "in case his friends wanted to telephone him"; of the pair of Saint Bernards that follow their master everywhere—in their own chauffeured station wagon. But there is little glee in the telling. Author Szasz, 56, a Hungarian-born translator of novels, is intent on drawing a stern conclusion—that a growing pack of petishists have come to treat their pets not as animals but as little furry people.

**A Pint for the Puma.** Unleashing twelve months of research, Mrs. Szasz concedes that pets can provide educational insights into nature. She details the successful efforts of therapists who use pets in diagnosing and treating mentally disturbed children. But man has become neurotic, she contends, when owners take pet alligators for drives, buy hairpieces for dogs and lace-

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MECCA FOR A MOLLYCODDLED MALTESE

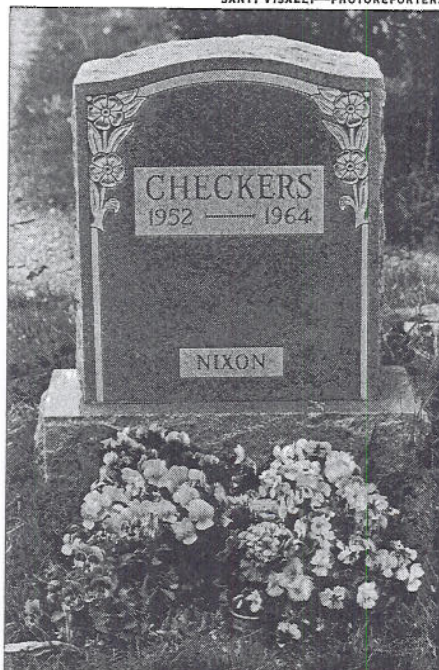
Also courses at canine funny farms.

trimmed nightgowns for cats, give the puma a pint of beer as a nightcap, and make unnecessary gourmet viands the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. pet-food market. Some owners bury their canaries and pooches under massive marble tombstones in special cemeteries. Only last week, an Italian court ruled that a wife was justified in leaving her husband because he regularly shared his bedroom with 30 cats and six dogs while forcing her to sleep in another room.

Petishists' motives are sad, most of them induced by the fact that pets seldom fight back. Mrs. Szasz describes parents guilt-ridden about mistreating their own children. They may try to make up for their failings by smothering their pets with love that would drive any person away. Other animal nuts are merely attempting to buy love. For still others, she quotes Sidney Jourard, a professor of psychology at the University of Florida, who suspects that in an uptight society, "the dog patter, the cat stroker, is seeking the contact that is conspicuously lacking in his adult life." "*Homo neuroticus*," says Mrs. Szasz, "de-animalizes his pets in exactly the same way he de-humanizes himself."

What does Mrs. Szasz propose to do? She repeats an ancient plea that man should love his fellow men first, then animals. Viewed properly, they can teach him some valuable lessons. She tells of the father who found his four-year-old son whipping his puppy dog with a belt and shouting, "I'll make a man of you yet, you sniveling little bastard." The father, notes Mrs. Szasz, quickly modified his educational methods.

SANTI VISALLI—PHOTOREPORTERS



LONG ISLAND GRAVE OF NIXON'S DOG

## Conspiracy of Silence

Returning to his Manhattan apartment one night, CBS Correspondent Hughes Rudd was mugged, robbed and left sprawled and bloodied on the street. Four hours later, as he finally stirred back to consciousness, a passing patrolman asked him what had happened and whether he needed an ambulance. Rudd stubbornly declined aid and limped home. The policeman did not bother to take down his name; except for a call to his credit-card companies, Rudd made no effort to report the assault. "What was the use?" he sighs.

More and more Americans are asking themselves the same question. Despite the "law and order" drive, the public adamantly refuses to report many crimes. According to the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, only about one-half of the rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries and major larcenies that are committed in the U.S. each year manage to get onto the police blotter.

**Crime Tolerance.** Nowhere is public and police indifference greater than in the big cities, where the violent-crime rate is already five times higher than in rural areas. Harassed, overworked and underpaid, metropolitan police often are not only unable but unwilling to deal with any except the most serious law-enforcement problems. In Detroit, for example, until the city installed a new computerized data-collecting system, many precinct lieutenants let their officers ignore the most obvious signs of burglary—pry marks on a door—and list only a broken window.

City dwellers glumly accept crime as an inevitable hazard. Despairing of ever recovering stolen goods or bringing criminals to account, they decide that silence is the better part of wisdom. After his car was ransacked, Long Island's Democratic Congressman Allard K. Lowenstein echoed the feelings of many of his constituents: "I didn't call the police because I was busy, because reporting takes so much time, and because it is so hard to get the police interested."

Public apathy may also be a measure of what Wayne State Sociologist Joseph L. Albini calls a community's "crime tolerance." Middle-class white mothers, for example, rarely let gang attacks on their children go unreported. Ghetto mothers, however, may well regard such incidents as necessary tests of their youngsters' ability to survive the slum's daily violence. Often, of course, Negro slum dwellers not only passively accept crime but also actively admire the criminals—especially if their victims are white. Many Harlemites, said a local N.A.A.C.P. official recently, "seem to have the idea that [black criminals] are some sort of 20th century Robin Hoods."

**Sweaty Palms.** Beyond sociological reasons lie the personal fears, guilt and shame of the victim himself. Police rare-