The Original Stain and Odour Eliminator!
Urine-Off™
Finally... Something that Actually Works!
VCA
discover more at vcaworld.com

Dogged Denial

By Sean Woodland

Denial was once the soul domain of politicians, celebrities and sports stars, not to forget those who remained convinced that Elvis would reappear after playing a highly competent game of hide-and-seek since 1977. In recent times, denial has begun to infiltrate all areas of society, including the pet owners world. Or, more specifically, the dog world. The all too familiar examples to follow, illustrate how seemingly banal clichés are highlighting a growth in denial, for both the owners of miscreant mutts and also for those less certain of the joys of canine companionship.

He's never done that before: This popular statement is denial cloaked in surreptitious blame. It can be delivered with an accusatory undertone, implying complicity on the part of the individual who has fresh Maltese Terrier tooth marks on the back of their hand. It can also be delivered laughingly, in an attempt to coax the victim into treating the incident as an exciting event, like being present when a baby takes its first steps, thereby inferring that perhaps you should treat the teeth marks as a sort of trophy. Either way, the ploy is a distraction, and the only possible way to highlight the denial is to say something like, 'And, I've never done this before,' while submerging the denier's head in a bathtub full of water.

My dog doesn't bite: This form of denial borders on delusion, can be semantics-based and is closely related to the type of denial employed by Bill Clinton when he spoke about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. The dog owner may prefer to have considered the bite to be little more than a playful nip, or an accident in mistaking part of your body for a tennis ball or frisbee, but it does little to change the fact that you have blood gushing from your calf muscle, courtesy of a dog that doesn't bite.

Are you sure you didn't do anything to provoke her? 'Yes,' you want to say. 'I thought, here's a salivating, unrestrained Rottweiler that weighs more than me, why don't I poke her with a stick to see if she will try and fit my head in her mouth.'

However, disbelief is the prevailing emotion so you don't say that at all.

The 'provoke' defence is commonplace, though is little more than a technique aimed at diverting responsibility away from the dog owner. Instead, it causes the victim to ponder their own part in having been accosted by a rampant Rottie. This strategy is not dissimilar to blaming someone for being hit by a car while walking along a footpath.

He's got little dog syndrome: This one is often uttered sheepishly just after you have managed to remove something that looks like a fluffy slipper from your trouser leg by swinging it at the hardest object in a friend's living room. Of course, you could inform the dog owner that you have watched The Dog Whisperer and know for a fact that dogs have no idea how big or little they are. Further, you could also inform the dog owner that the reason their charming Chihuahua behaves in such a manner is because it has been treated as if it is human when it is actually anything but a human (note the tail). And, you could even inform the dog owner that their dog has narcissistic tendencies because it knows no boundaries and has been raised by people who probably shouldn't have a dog. But, of course you do none of these things, instead you become a revenge-fuelled lunatic, and dream of treating the dog like a Hacky-Sack, all while thanking your lucky stars that your friend dropped the idea of getting a Bull Mastiff.

I've tried everything, nothing seems to work: What the dog owner is basically saying here is that they walked their loopy Labrador three times and gave up because the dog seemed determined to do the exact opposite to what was requested of it. Or, that the Lucifer impersonating Lassie embarrassed them so badly at puppy school that they were too ashamed to go back. Or, that their hungry hound was disciplined twice for chewing the cedar table leg, but within ten minutes was given a pig's trotter because its eyes looked sad.

POPPY'S The Only Bed that Deserves a Standing Ovation!
There's a size and colour perfect for your pet.Filled with MicroCloud, the ultimate in luxury bed fillings.
Soft, Cosy and blissful.....
For Your Nearest Poppy's Stockist call 1800 032 139
Outstanding 5 star features include:
Fully Machine Washable
Tumble Dry
Dust mite and Flea Resistant
Five Year Guarantee*
* Guarantee against faulty materials and workmanship
LUXURY
MicroCloud
* The ultimate in luxury fillings. Feels just like goose down; cosy, soft and blissful. Odorless and Non-Allergenic.
HealthGuard
* Used to protect against micro organisms like mould and bacteria. Guaranteed allergy control.

The people who employ the 'I've tried everything' type of denial in defence of their dogs are probably the same people who have tried everything to give up smoking, except stopping, and who have tried everything to lose weight except exercising or reducing the amount of food they consume.

It's in the breed: This is a form of canine racism, and if it weren't for the fact that the first one to mention Hitler loses an argument, now would be a good time to remind the owner of a dog that has a child holding onto a lead and flying like a kite behind it that not all Germans conducted themselves in the same way as the moustached madman, as don't all Schnauzers or German Short-Haired Pointers.

She's house-trained: What is most astonishing about this type of denial is that it is usually said in opposition to what you can see steaming on your thousand dollar, wool blend rug at the time, while the only other beings in attendance are human. In this case, and assuming none of your friends are drunk footballers, the only way for the bewildered rug owner to remain sane is to assume that by house-trained, the dog owner meant their dog only poos in the house.

He's had an accident: No, he hasn't. What's he's done is pooped on your kitchen floor or cocked his leg on your stereo speaker. An accident would be if a Border Collie is running after a ball, remaining unaware of a rapidly approaching tree until its ribcage connects with the trunk.

Is your dog friendly? Yet another attempt at sewing the seeds of doubt and deflecting responsibility, usually for what is about to happen. This question is often asked by people with petulant Pomeranians of people with smiling Staffies. The small dog owner knows full well that their dog is about to impersonate the Incredible Hulk and savage the bigger, placid dog.

Sorry, he hasn't been desexed: Whilst this type of denial carries potential investigative merit for some members of the human race, you are within your rights to inform the dog owner that you are not so worried about their dog humping your leg, that you are actually afraid of it severing your arm.

Does your dog bite? Whilst this is a natural enough question to ask, it is also a silly one, because it is inviting the response to be a lie. The person asking the question desperately wants you to answer in the negative, but the only honest answers are 'It hasn't yet,' or 'Yes' which no one ever says anyway. This leaves 'No' as the answer everyone gives, but comes with the associated risk of your dog biting, thereby making a liar out of you. If this happens and the person says, 'I thought you said your dog didn't bite,' you can simply answer, 'I never said it was my dog.'

Aren't those dogs dangerous? Note the rhetorical nature of this question. It proves, that dog denial is not the exclusive property of dog owners. If you are unfortunate enough to own a breed of dog that is adorned with a fat head, it is likely you will come across numerous people for whom the relentless media campaign propagating fear of certain breeds has been more successfully embedded in their consciousnesses than anything since their times tables in primary school. Whilst you could explain that vending machines kill more people than dogs, or that there is a distinct difference between paranoia and caution, it is probably an exercise in futility, as these people are also likely to have been brainwashed to think that every Muslim is Osama bin Laden, all skateboard riders are knife-wielding drug addicts and everything, including red wine causes cancer. Rather than waste your breath explaining how humans have to be scared of something, and that the fear-baton has simply been passed to a new enemy, the best thing to do when asked 'Aren't those dogs dangerous?' is to answer in the affirmative manner that the rhetorical question demands. For best effects, do so while smiling like Jack Nicholson.

It's just the hygiene issue: People who say this are denying their dislike of dogs, for if dogs posed a serious threat to our health and hygiene, half the country's population would be quarantined or behaving in a manner that draws the attention of men in white coats. If you can imagine the sort of do-good dog lover who is so keen to do the right thing, they will resort to carrying a plastic bag with a dog poo in it with them as if it were a handbag for much longer than they need to, these people are the complete opposite of them. They probably hate dogs, have difficulty accepting that humans are a part of nature, not above it, and could even have been the type who once took pleasure in deliberately stomping on ants.

She acts like she's a human: The best way to determine whether or not this type of behavioural comparison is such a good thing is to flip the simile around. It becomes immediately apparent that comparing dogs and humans is not such a good idea, for if a human carried on at a park in the same way as a dog does, serious criminal charges would follow. Whilst this final example is more a sign of someone who needs to get out more than denial, it certainly adds credence to the theory that perhaps it's not the dogs we should be scared of at all. Maybe it's the people around them.

Sean Woodland is a writer, and yes, he has a dog that does not bite.

Be Puppy Prepared

Training Tip for Tiny Tots

For many puppies, the first trip to the vet can be a scary experience. It may well involve the first time trip in a car, unusual surroundings and an 'owie' from a vaccination needle. A simple plan to make it a less stressful experience can be as simple as a preliminary trip to the vet just for fun.

Arrange ahead of time to bring puppy to the vet clinic for a meet and greet. Take treats (clinic staff will probably dole treats out too) and make your first veterinary visit a positive one. Since your pet will be in for regular wellness exams with your veterinarian, it's important to make those visits pleasant.

Start by regularly handling pets when they are young, including looking into their ears, rubbing their toes and brushing their hair and teeth. Making these activities habitual helps animals become comfortable with ear and teeth exams and other routine procedures such as nail clippings.