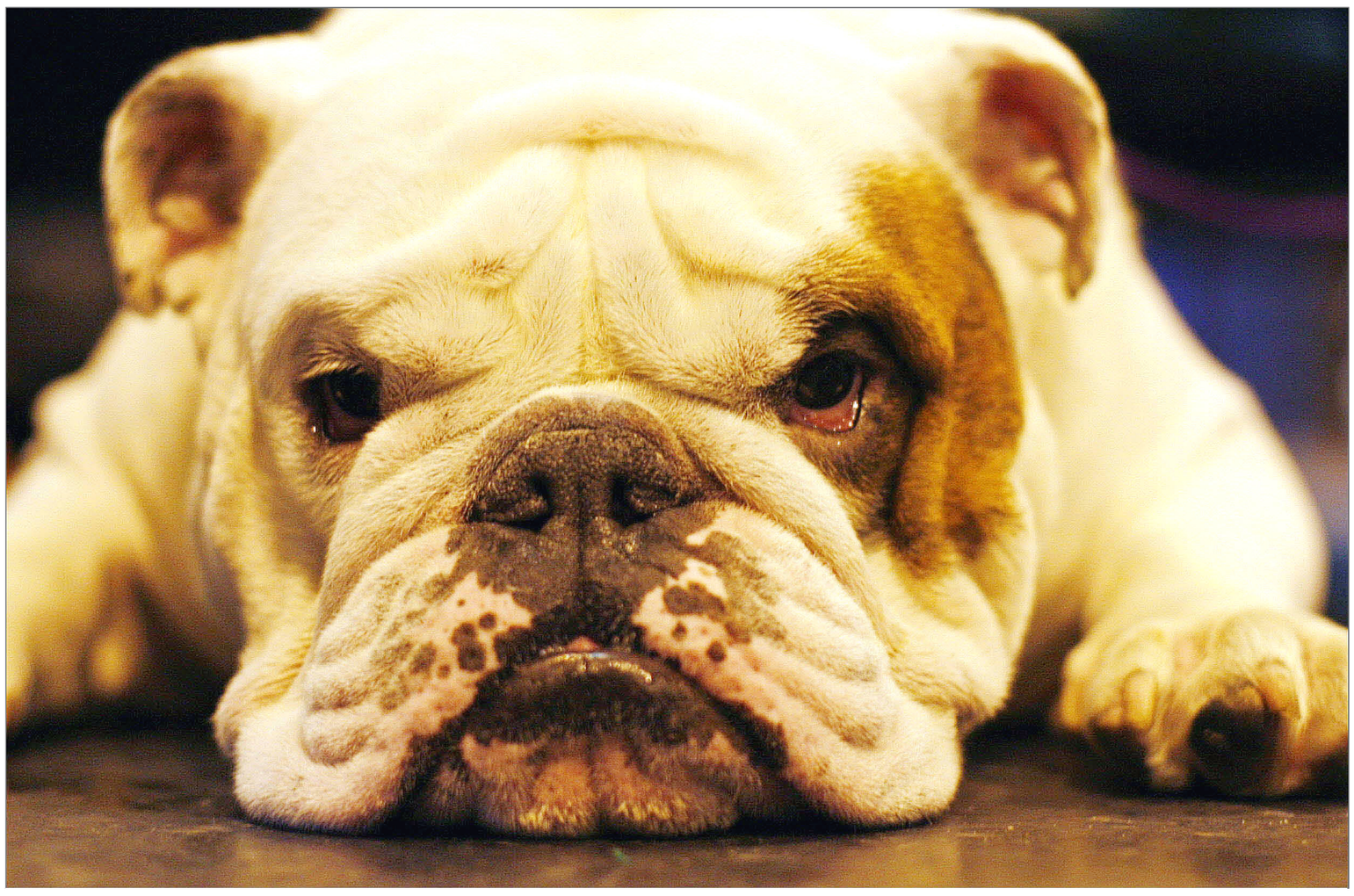

PHOTO: AFP

Leaders of the pack

Can dog-whispering techniques used to control canines also work with children?

BY **LUCY ATKINS**
THE GUARDIAN, LONDON

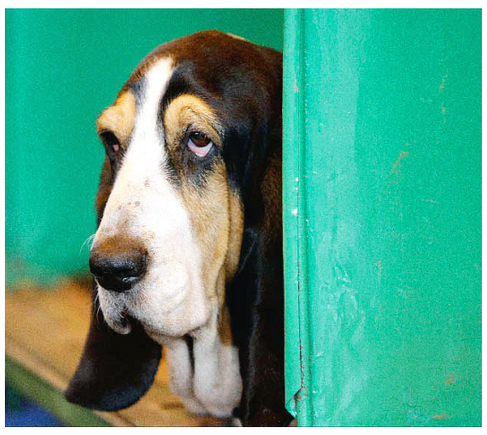

PHOTO: REUTERS

On parenting blogs, Web sites and Twitter, the guilty admissions are all the same: the training techniques of Cesar Millan, aka "The Dog Whisperer," work on kids too. Millan has published four books; his show runs on a perpetual reel on the National Geographic channel. "As I watched him work with an extremely aggressive pit bull," admits a woman called TheMentorMom on Minti.com, "I saw that some of his techniques and philosophies applied to teaching children."

While a push on the neck or a loud "Sshht!" could cause raised eyebrows at the toddler group, the notion that dogs and children share a need for calm, assertive "pack leaders" and that both need exercise, discipline and love seems reasonable. No wonder such theories are challenging the trend for indulgent "helicopter" parenting.

"Today's parents have less time for their children, so when they do see them the last thing they want is confrontation," says psychologist Aric Sigman, author of *The Spoilt Generation*. "But parents are finally realizing that the tail is wagging the dog. Authority is a good thing."

Parenting coach Judy Reith used the Dog Whisperer's techniques on her terrier, Ollie. Now she applies them "every day" to her three daughters (aged 18, 15 and 10). As with her dog, she says, "I sometimes have to assume an air of quiet confidence with my children, even if I don't feel it inside. Parents just want to be their [kids'] friends because they hardly see them. But it's no good being their friend. You need to be unpopular sometimes and lay down the law."

Cesar Millan, author of dog-training manuals, helps owners raise obedient pets. Some parents say his technique works on children.

PHOTO: AP

Sigman points to universals in "behavior modification techniques" across the animal and human world: a bear cuffing her cub, an elephant in effect "shouting" at a straying calf. Even in adolescence, he says, "Teens still want you to be the pack leader, if only to rebel against you."

But other experts are more skeptical. "Using Dog Whisperer techniques on kids infantilizes kids and adults," says Frank Furedi, author of *Wasted: Why Education Isn't Educating*. "Quick-fix techniques like this distract from the important task of creating a relationship with a child."

Surely, though, a quick fix is better than chaos? So I try the technique at home. When my out-of-control Labrador snatches a sausage from the table, I tell him "Ssshh" then, in a calm, firm tone: "Go to your bed." He looks at me, quietly defiant. I scream it, and he obeys. My three children Isabella, 10, Sam, eight, and Ted, five, meanwhile, seem surprised when I explain with calm authority that TV time is over. They don't whine for long when I snap it off. However, my eldest finds the idea that she has anything in common with the dog a bit offensive. "Dogs can't learn on their own so they need more help," she says. "But kids need to be a bit naughty sometimes. If parents just take control all the time then we'll become too sensible too early in life. And sensible people are no fun."

Ohio set to execute inmate with one drug

Progress or cruelty? The untested procedure is said to be 'more humane' than the current three-drug method

AFP, COLUMBUS, OHIO

Following a botched execution in September and barring a successful legal challenge, Ohio will today become the first US state to execute a death row inmate with only one drug.

The move has raised a host of legal and ethical issues with critics saying Kenneth Biros, sentenced to death for killing and dismembering a 22-year-old woman in 1991, is a human guinea pig being subjected to an untested procedure.

Those in favor say the new method will be more humane and efficient than the three-drug cocktail used in 34 of the 35 other states where capital punishment is still practiced in the US.

"It is a unique execution protocol in the country," said Julie Walburn, the state prison spokeswoman for Ohio, which switched to the new method last month after a disastrous attempt to execute Romell Broom.

Executioners spent two hours searching for a vein to inject Broom — convicted of the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl — failing 18 times to insert a needle before giving up.

All executions were put on hold while the state searched for an alternative to the old method, which used one drug to anesthetize, another to paralyze and a third to stop the heart.

Ohio now plans to use just the anesthetic drug, thiopental sodium, but in doses that are two and a half times bigger than the amount currently administered.

The new protocol also includes a back-up option that means executioners can deliver an intramuscular injection containing massive doses of two chemicals, a sedative and a painkiller, if they cannot find a vein.

The process can be repeated three times until the prisoner is dead.

Opponents of the three-drug method say it is cruel because the inmate can suffer extreme pain if the first drug fails to work properly.

But a lawyer for 51-year-old Biros described the new method as no more than "human experimentation" as he issued an appeal to Ohio Governor Ted Strickland for a second emergency stay of his client's execution.

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

"The newest protocol calls for the use of drugs and methods that have never been used in an execution in the history of the US or any other civilized country," the plea said.

The court filing argues that the unknown consequences of the new methods make the protocol a violation of the constitutional prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishment."

A federal judge has already granted Biros one stay of execution, in the wake of the Broom fiasco, based on previous arguments that the three-drug cocktail was a violation of the same constitutional rights.

Biros, whose execution is bound to be watched with interest by other US states, could still be granted a second stay if doubts about the new, untried method are adjudged to be valid.

Defense lawyer Timothy Young said he had concerns about the new protocol, in particular over when to begin using the two-drug intramuscular injection. "Who is going to make the decision to switch? After how long?"

Terry Collins, head of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, who has presided over 31 of 32 executions in the state since 1999, dismissed lawyers' doubts as a "smoke screen" aimed at trying to "cloud the issue."

It is only "technically true" that the use of the one drug for executions is new, said Collins.

"It's not an experiment drug, it's used in existing protocol and it's used in hospitals all across this nation and in the world" to anesthetize people before surgery, he said.

Biros was originally to be executed in March 2007, but the US Supreme Court put his execution on hold at the eleventh-hour because of a federal suit challenging lethal injection procedures.

He is therefore one of the few inmates to be making a return journey to the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, known as "Death House", where those awaiting execution spend their last hours.

The US Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of lethal injection in a landmark ruling last year.

Andean nations seek revival of ancient Inca tongue

Quechua is gaining traction with leftist presidents and a TV station promoting its use

BY **WALKER SIMON**
REUTERS, LATACUNGA, ECUADOR

A shaman blows a bull's horn on festival day and pivots to clouds of burning incense in a purification ceremony, all shot on video.

The snapshot of native American life opens Nukanchik Yuyay, a twice-daily newscast in Quechua, the language spoken by millions of people across the Andes and enjoying a revival as even presidents take up its cause.

The program's newscasters speak below a woolen tapestry of Cotopaxi, a glacier-capped volcano within sight of the station, Ecuador's channel 47. Besides the station's cameras, a wolf mask bares white fangs.

Based in Latacunga, 80km south of Quito, Channel 47 says it is the world's first television station for Quechua speakers. On air since July, it features 30 percent Quechua programs and aims to go mostly monolingual as its audience increases.

"Our next project is Quechua cartoons ... to draw in children," says station manager Angel Tiban.

Channel 47's appearance is a part of broader efforts to inject new life into Quechua, repressed by late Spanish colonial powers. New constitutions in Bolivia and Ecuador, enacted under leftist presidents, enshrine Quechua as an official language, and Bolivia this year founded the first Quechua-speaking university.

In Ecuador, Rafael Correa is the nation's first fluent Quechua-speaking president in memory.

Quechua speakers live along the Andes, from Argentina and Chile in the south to Colombia in the north, where it's called *ingano*. Most are in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador.

First spread by the Incas, Quechua expanded its reach under the Spanish who used it to spread Roman Catholicism.

For centuries, university professors taught the language at the region's premier university, San Marcos. Quechua books and theater on Inca history flourished. But that suddenly halted and classes were banned after colonial authorities crushed an Indian rebellion in 1781 led by Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui, who adopted the name of Inca ruler Tupac Amaru.

Estimates of Quechua speakers range from 6 million to 13 million, but linguists say that even now some Andeans still won't tell census takers they speak the language because of its long association with backwardness and low social status.

CHANGING STATUS

"Kichwa (Quechua) used to have no prestige ... If you wanted prestige, you learned English, French or German," says linguist Jose Maldonado, a presidential adviser who provides a weekly recap in Quechua on national television of Correa's activities.

Now, Ecuadoreans outnumber Americans in Quechua classes at Maldonado's university and bodyguards, police and civil servants at the presidential palace are signing up for in-house classes.

With an eye on younger generations, Quechua educators and broadcasters are also seeking to promote the "cosmovision" of Indian peoples once ruled by the Incas. It invokes the intricate balance of dualities that make up the world.

"In geography, we want to teach that there are male mountains and female mountains, and sometimes a smaller mountain between is a child," said Alberto Conejo, academic director of intercultural bilingual education at Ecuador's education ministry. He wore a blue poncho and many bureaucrats on the high-rise floor wore traditional Indian dress.

To illustrate "cosmovision" to a recent vistor, Channel 47 manager Tiban rolled tape of a native flutist's Quechua interview, and interpreted: "He is saying some wind pipes are masculine, others are feminine, and that they have to be in equilibrium for harmony."

Quechua "cosmovision" dualities include hot and cold, and night and day, said Lucila Lema, a bilingual poet who until this month hosted the Quito-based Quechua newscast Kichwapi or In Quechua. It is the first national newscast of the day on an otherwise Spanish-language network RTS.

Kichwapi colleague Enrique Conejo said some terms defy easy Quechua translation: "The word inflation is a headache." But other translations have gained traction. Kichwapi now calls a car *antawa* — derived from the Quechua word *anta*, or metal.

Quechua promoters are campaigning to turn national legislatures into bilingual bodies but the Ecuadorean bid has already met resistance, says congressman Pedro de la Cruz.

Congressional authorities told him it cost too much to pay for simultaneous interpreters and translation cabins.

As a compromise, he said, the National Assembly allows a quartet of Indian legislators to speak five minutes in Quechua on top of lawmakers' standard 10-minute Spanish time cap.

The Web sites of Ecuador's National Assembly and Peru's Congress now feature extensive Quechua sections.

Journalist Rosa Inaguan, left, conducts an interview for the state Ecuador TV station in Quechua, the native language of the Incas, in Quito, Ecuador.

PHOTO: AFP