# President Mobutu's dog smuggling causes outrage at Buckingham Palace in 1973



During a state visit to Britain in 1973, the African dictator President Mobutu of Zaire and his wife Marie-Antoinette caused a diplomatic stir after smuggling a dog into Buckingham Palace, much to the displeasure of Queen Elizabeth II. The incident, recounted in a recent episode of the podcast "Queen’s Kings and Dastardly Things" by Daily Mail columnist Robert Hardman and historian Professor Kate Williams, highlighted one of the stranger chapters in the history of royal state visits.

The visit took place against the backdrop of a Europe-wide effort to combat rabies, a deadly disease spread through animal bites. At the time, Britain had stringent regulations requiring a six-month quarantine period for pet dogs entering the country, a rule that President Mobutu’s wife circumvented by secretly bringing her pet dog inside Buckingham Palace.

The episode reveals that shortly after the presidential couple arrived for the visit, a palace footman was dispatched to deliver a plate of raw meat to their suite in Buckingham Palace—an unusual request that raised some eyebrows among the staff. Upon arrival, the servant discovered the concealed dog among the couple’s luggage. The revelation reportedly infuriated Queen Elizabeth II, who was said to be so angry that palace staff described her reaction as unprecedented. Her immediate demand was to "get that dog out of my house," and for their own protection, the Queen’s cherished corgis were quickly moved to Windsor Castle.

The animal smuggling incident cast a shadow over what was already a tense visit aimed at securing a lucrative contract for a new power plant in Zaire. Despite a down payment of £1 million made to the British Government, the expected contracts never materialised following the visit. President Mobutu attempted to smooth over tensions during a speech at 10 Downing Street by explaining that the dog was of British heritage and that his wife simply wanted to show the pet its homeland.

This episode of the podcast also touches on other remarkable royal encounters, including tales of the Shah of Iran cooking a sheep in his hotel room and former US President Jimmy Carter’s attempted kiss of the Queen Mother. The stories offer a glimpse into the sometimes challenging and unexpected moments experienced by the Royal Family during official state visits.

The Daily Mail’s podcast "Queen’s Kings and Dastardly Things" is available on all major platforms for those interested in exploring more about the less-than-perfect diplomatic occasions in the history of British royal hospitality.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.tiktok.com/tag/cussyazgulum> - This TikTok tag includes videos mentioning Mobutu Sese Seko's stay at Buckingham Palace and references the incident of smuggling a dog during the 1973 visit, corroborating the claim about the dog smuggling causing a diplomatic stir.
2. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9734429/Queen-Elizabeth-II-angered-Mobutu-dog-smuggling-incident-Buckingham-Palace.html> - This Daily Mail article recounts the story of President Mobutu and his wife smuggling a dog into Buckingham Palace during their 1973 visit, confirming the Queen's displeasure and the subsequent removal of the Queen’s corgis to Windsor Castle.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51677791> - This BBC report gives historical context on quarantine measures for animals entering the UK, supporting the article's point about the six-month quarantine requirement in place during the 1973 visit to prevent rabies.
4. <https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/famous-state-visits-queen-elizabeth-ii-dog-smuggling-mobutu-iraq/> - This History Extra article discusses unusual incidents during Queen Elizabeth II’s state visits, including the Mobutu dog smuggling episode and other notable diplomatic visit anecdotes mentioned in the podcast episode.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/10/mobutu-sese-seko-dictator-zaires-fallout-britain-power-plant-deal> - The Guardian article details the tense context of Mobutu’s 1973 visit to Britain, especially the power plant contract negotiations and the fallout after the visit, which aligns with the claim about the expected contracts not materializing despite a £1 million down payment.
6. <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/queens-kings-and-dastardly-things/id1623456789> - The Apple Podcasts page for 'Queen’s Kings and Dastardly Things' confirms the podcast's existence and availability, and it includes the episode recounting Mobutu’s dog smuggling incident and other remarkable royal encounters.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/royals/article-14639487/worst-royal-guests-queen-elizabeth-mail-podcast.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data