

a short film by Jackie van Beek

Go the dogs

An accidental adventure



61st Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Generation



GO THE DOGS

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Title	Go The Dogs
Writer/ Director	Jackie van Beek
Producers	Aaron Watson & Jackie van Beek
Production Company	Sabertooth Productions Ltd
Country of Production	New Zealand/ Australia
Screening Format	35mm
Shooting Format	HD
Screening Ratio	1:1.85
Sound	Dolby Digital
Length	15 minutes
Completion Date	January 2011

INTERNATIONAL SALES

NZ FILM Lisa Chatfield
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NEW ZEALAND FILM

SHORT SYNOPSIS

A young teenager with autism unwittingly embarks on a strange adventure leading to an abandoned farmhouse and a runaway boy.

SYNOPSIS

Brittany is a thirteen-year old girl with autism, a keen football fan and a supporter of Melbourne's Western Bulldogs. When she spies a real bulldog sitting outside her window, she slips out of the house. She unwittingly embarks on a strange adventure leading to an abandoned farmhouse, where she strikes up an unlikely friendship with a runaway boy. The lead role is played by a young teenager with special needs.

FILM FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

2011 Berlin International Film Festival: Generation Program (World Premiere) (Germany)

2011 New Zealand International Film Festival (NZ)

2011 Show Me Shorts Film Festival (NZ)

2011 Hamburg International Film Festival, Germany

2011 Melbourne International Film Festival, Australia

2011 Kyoto International Children's Film Festival, Japan

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Jackie works as an actress, writer and director in theatre and film. She lives with her young family in Auckland, New Zealand.

Jackie comes from a theatre background. She has had a string of plays commissioned and produced, and has devised and toured comedy shows in New Zealand, Australia and the UK. She gravitates towards working with young people on projects with a community focus.

During her time in Australia she began to write and direct short films. Her first film, *One Shoe Short*, was inspired by two indigenous boys living on a town camp in Alice Springs. The film played at the 2008 BFI London Film Festival and was selected for the WIFT International Showcase. It won Best Indigenous Achievement at the St Kilda Film Festival (Australia) and was voted Best Film made by Adults for Children, by a youth jury at the Auburn International Film Festival (Australia).

Jackie made her second film, *Just Like The Others*, with a community group in London. It won Kodak Best Film in the Show Me Shorts Festival (NZ) and is touring as part of Clermont-Ferrand's Schools' Tour. Both films are being used as educational resources in Denmark, UK, France and Australia.

Go The Dogs is Jackie's third film and was inspired by working with students at a special development school in Melbourne, Australia.

Jackie has two short films in post-production and recently received a grant from the New Zealand Film Commission to direct *Uphill*, a short film set in the Southern Alps of New Zealand.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Go The Dogs began very quickly. I stumbled upon an abandoned farmhouse in country Victoria. Trees were growing out of the windows giving the house a wonderful fairytale quality. My sister and I jumped the fence and ventured inside. We stepped over a dead rabbit in the hallway and wandered from room to room. The house was filled with hay. Being snake season, we didn't hang about for too long. We drove back to Melbourne and I set about finding the owners. I eventually tracked them down and they gave me permission to shoot a film on their property.

At the time I was teaching drama at Sunshine Special Development School, a school for children with special needs. *Go The Dogs* was partially inspired by a student with autism that produced a house plan of draftsman-like quality during an art class. I wrote the lead role for a girl with autism but when it came to casting the role I realised I needed someone who was fairly emotional and interactive. I needed someone that could easily warm to me and quickly learn to trust me. I cast Brittany, a twelve year old with special needs.

We cobbled together a couple of community grants and shot the film with a small crew of family and friends. After finishing the cut, we were offered post-production support from Autism Victoria and New Zealand Film Commission to complete the film back in New Zealand.

I found the project thrilling. It was lovely to work so quickly and instinctively. It was an extremely high-risk project - largely dependant on the willingness of a dog, a snake and a twelve-year-old girl with special needs. I knew the project could go either way but the positive energy and adventurous spirit of everyone involved allowed us to get through the shoot and create a film that I believe has a unique and special quality.

JACKIE VAN BEEK

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2011 UPHILL

Short Film - Drama - Writer/ Director - Southern Alps, New Zealand

Currently in pre-production. Supported by New Zealand Film Commission.

2011 IN SAFE HANDS

15 minutes - Drama - Writer/ Director - Dunedin, New Zealand

Currently in post production.

2011 LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

5 minutes - Drama - Writer/ Director/ Co-Producer - Australia & New Zealand

Currently in post production

2009 JUST LIKE THE OTHERS

10 minutes - Drama - Writer/ Director/ Co-Producer - UK & Australia

Selected Film Festival Screenings

2010 Seoul International Youth Film Festival (South Korea)

2010 St Kilda Film Festival (Australia)

2010 Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival - Schools & Tribute Programme (France)

2009 LA Shortsfest (USA)

2009 Giffoni Film Festival (Italy)

2009 Buster Copenhagen Film Festival (Denmark)

Awards

2009 Kodak Best Film - Show Me Shorts Film Festival (New Zealand)

2007 ONE SHOE SHORT

8 minutes - Drama - Writer/ Director/ Producer - Alice Springs, Australia

Selected Film Festival Screenings

2010 London Australian Film Festival (London)

2009 WIFT International 'Best Of' Showcase (Touring)

2009 Adelaide International Film Festival (Australia)

2008 BFI London Film Festival (UK)

2008 Salento International Film Festival (Italy)

2008 WOW Film Festival (Australia)

Awards

2009 Best Indigenous Achievement - St Kilda Film Festival (Australia)

2008 Tadgell's Bluebell Honor Award - Auburn International Film Festival (Australia)

Acquisitions

SBS Australia

NITV Australia

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

Aaron Watson - Producer

Aaron Watson began his media career as an actor and writer for television. He then spent 14 years working in Central Europe and Russia as a Tour Director. During this time he filmed two documentaries with his friend and collaborator Te Radar; one in East Timor (Timor ODDessy) and the other in Israel and Palestine (Christmas in Bethlehem). In recent years he has been working with creative partners, director Jackie van Beek and cinematographer Ari Wegner. The trio are currently working a fourth short film together.

Ari Wegner - Cinematographer

Born in Melbourne, Australia in 1984, Ari is a cinematography graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Film and Television. In her graduating year she attended the Budapest Cinematography Masterclass and won the VCA Award for Best Cinematography. She participated in the 2009 Berlinale Talent Campus as part of the 2009 Berlin International Film Festival. Her cinematography work extends from short films, music videos, and commercials to feature-length documentaries and dramas. Her short film credits as cinematographer, including *Hawker* (2008) directed by Dustin Feneley, *Kin* (2006) directed by Stephen Carroll, and *Catch Fish* (2006) directed by Adam Arkapaw, have screened at numerous international film festivals such as Locarno, London, Cinema Jove, Sapporo, Cork, Raindance, Melbourne and Flickerfest International Film Festivals. She shot her first feature-length film, *The Tragedy of Hamlet: Prince of Denmark* (2007), at 21 years of age. The film had its world premiere at the 2007 Melbourne International Film Festival. She recently shot *Matière Grise*, the debut feature film of Rwandan director Daddy Ruhorahoza.

Jochen FitzHerbet - Editor

After completing his Masters degree in 2002, majoring in directing and writing, Jochen began working in post-production as an assistant editor on short films and television drama. At the same time he continued his writing and had one of his short films, *Rest Stop*, funded by the NZ Film Commission in 2003. Jochen honed his skills in VFX and was both a compositor and co-ordinator on the BBC family series *Maddigan's Quest* which led him onto VFX Editing on a number of projects including Disney's *Power Rangers* and Columbia Picture's *30 Days of Night*. He moved into editing and got his break on *Power Rangers*. Since then Jochen continues to cut television dramas (*Go Girls*, *This Is Not My Life*) and short films as well as having written and directed another NZ Film Commission film, *Bridge*, that played in competition at the Valladolid Film Festival. Jochen is currently working on his first feature and continuing to edit. He is working with Jackie van Beek on her short film currently in post-production, *In Safe Hands*.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Brittany-Anne Romijn

Brittany, 13, lives in Melbourne, Australia. She attends Sunshine Special Development School and her favourite subject is singing. Her favourite thing to do is go to the swimming pool with her family. Her dad describes her as a girl "with a lovely nature. She lives day to day and just does what she does".

Go The Dogs is Brittany's first short film. She has since starred as Grandma in Jackie's short film *Little Red Riding Hood: A Special Edition* that was made with 48 students from the school.

Graham Candy

Graham, 19, lives in Auckland, New Zealand. He started his career as a ballroom and Latin dancer and went on to become a New Zealand and Australian Champion. In 2008 he enrolled in Performing and Screen Arts at Unitec to study acting and in 2010 he began recording music with his band, *The Lost Boys*.

He has recently gravitated towards musical theatre performing as Troy in *High School Musical* and Willard in *Footloose*. *Go The Dogs* is Graham's first short film.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND ANIMALS

Director - Jackie van Beek

Meeting Brittany's parents was a great relief. Of course I needed their permission to work with their daughter but I also needed them to trust me and be enthusiastic about the project I was proposing. Thankfully they saw the film as a positive challenge for Brittany and became increasingly excited as we drew closer to production. Paul and Donna invited me over to their house to meet Brittany's brother and twin sisters and they all agreed to star in the opening scene of the film. Their house was filled with birds and aquariums. I even cast Angel, their pet rat, but unfortunately she pulled out just before the shoot. After meeting the family I completely re-imagined the opening of the film. The Romijns are a warm, fun, chaotic family and that became my focus for the first scene.

I scheduled a 20-minute rehearsal with Brittany before the shoot so I could gauge how much she might respond to direction. It went very well. She listened carefully and was adept at changing her performance. On set she rarely looked at me when I gave her direction. She would just nod and say "yup" occasionally. At first, I wondered if she was listening at all but she took everything on-board. Throughout the shoot it never ceased to amaze me how fresh each of her takes were. It was as if she was truly doing it for the first time - and you can't ask for more than that!

The rehearsal that really counted was our snake rehearsal. We travelled out of town to meet up with Michael Alexander from Black Snake productions. He met us in a park and we set about handling seven or eight of his snakes. Brittany was very unsure about touching the snakes initially but with the encouragement of her Dad it wasn't long before she had them hanging around her neck. She warmed to a Water Python named Bubbles so I cast him on the spot.

It was a strenuous 3-day shoot and two days were out of town so Brittany became increasingly exhausted. Her Dad, Paul, and her Godfather, Ricky, were on-set cracking jokes and playing music to keep her energy levels up and when she'd had enough they'd help her relax and talk quietly with her. Thanks to her supportive family, she always reappeared on set with a smile, ready to begin again.

Producer - Aaron Watson

I knew this was going to be a fun project when one of the first things Jackie asked me to do was find a snake, and a bulldog capable of leaping into the back of a truck. It's great that some days my job involves phoning bulldog breeders in Melbourne, snake handlers, and Youtubing clips of bulldogs jumping. In case you're curious, a bulldog cannot leap into the back of a truck, not even close.

Michael, the snake guy, was awesome when he showed up on the shoot. He tore into the paddock in his station wagon, jumped out in his khakis, and flipped the back open to reveal crates with snakes, monitor lizards and a water crocodile - he was off to a children's party later. Shooting ground to a halt as afternoon morphed into a reptilian show and tell session.

I'd work with animals again. Kingston the bulldog, was easy. He had a big crush on the Assistant Director's leg - whenever we needed him to walk or run in a certain direction, we'd just use Matt as bait. And, apart from trying to escape into the straw at every opportunity, Bubbles the water python, was adorable.

CREDITS

Writer/ Director	Jackie van Beek
Cinematographer	Ari Wegner
Editor	Jochen FitzHerbert
Production Designer	Paige Anderson
Sound Designer	Dustin Harris
Original Music	Peter Daubé
Producers	Aaron Watson & Jackie van Beek
	In Association with the Short Film Fund of the New Zealand Film Commission
Girl	Brittany-Anne Romijn
Boy	Graham Candy
Family	Donna Romijn
	Paul Romijn
	Shannon Romijn
	Sinead Romijn
	Gemma Romijn
Police Officer	Danielle Cresp
Man with dog	Jesse Griffin
Dog	Kingston
Dog Wrangler	Renata Laureano
Snake	Bubbles
Snake Wrangler	Michael Alexander

Assistant Director	Matthew Rich
Sound Recordist	Steven Bond
B Camera Operator	Stefan Duscio
Gaffer	Thom Holt
Best Boy	Tom Savige
3 rd Electrics	Marcus Alleman
Production Assistants	Melanie Hamilton & Paula van Beek
Runner	Jesse Griffin
Catering	Francesca Fogarty & Hamish Woods
Musicians	Peter Daubé Nick Bollinger Tim Robinson
Sound Engineer	Dick Reade
Foley	Jeremy Kessler Kitchen Sync Digital Audio
Title Animation	Marcus Brill
Colourist	Alana Cotton
Sound Mix	Ben Sinclair
Post Facility	Images and Sound

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Lemac
Key Lighting Australia

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The Romijn Family
Ricky Ellul
Heath Lander
Angela Sutherland
Steven Bruton
Judy and Joe van Beek
The Griffin Family
Lynne and Eddie Nisbett
The Dellavedova Family
Jesse Griffin
Juliette Veber
Lisa Hough
Dustin Feneley
Peter Salmon
June and Emmett van Griffin
Emma Willis
Sunshine Special Development School
Black Snake Productions
AFL Films

Western Bulldogs
Victoria Police Film Unit
Footscray Police Station
Auspicious Arts
West Footscray Neighbourhood House
Golden Country Motel & Caravan Park
Braybrook Hotel

No animals were harmed in the making of this film

International Sales by NZ Film

Filmed on location in Victoria, Australia

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