



7 Days with 7 Dogs A Dog-umentary

Director's Statement Billie Dean

The idea for 7 Days with 7 Dogs arose from our desire to make every day a jewel for our aged and ailing dog Suki. The vet had given her only weeks to live, and she loved outings. Understanding that joy is a very healing emotion, I set out to give her the best outing I could – a road trip holiday. Of course, the other six rescued dogs couldn't be left behind. Most of them were elderly too, and we wanted them all to have a special time.

I decided to film it because we work in animal rescue and see a lot of ignorance and cruelty. A lot of dogs are dumped at holiday time because people want to go away. If we can take seven dogs and stay in a variety of places with a variety of price tags, then it gets the message out there that other people can easily travel with one or two dogs.

It also showed that by putting the dogs first, our lives were enriched. When we shot the film we were really stressed, living on a farm and having to buy water during the drought. Despite hours of driving, the shoot was pretty relaxed and the holiday made us realise we needed a break as much as Suki did. That shows in the film too.

Further, I didn't know how the trip would turn out, but I had a clear vision that I wanted to make the film stylised, fun and upbeat. The world is so serious and glum right now and I wanted to make something heartfelt and entertaining to try and put a smile on an audience's face.

I have to admit that I also saw it as an opportunity to provide change in the dog world by setting an example. If people see this family taking their dogs on holiday, feeding them a natural diet and seeing holistic animal practitioners, then maybe it will help other people, plant some seeds or just get people thinking, as well as entertaining them.

I guess the big message I wanted to get out there was for people to treasure the gift that is their dog. All that unconditional love is to be rewarded not trashed. And you never know how long they're going to be with you.

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