



# Bird Dog

a short film by Katrina Whalen

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## Introduction

Growing up in Wyoming, ten-year-old Rose is happily at home when out on bird hunts with her family. However, when she rises to her older brother's dare and swallows the heart of a mourning dove during a hunt, she begins to worry that the heart in her belly will sprout into a fully formed dove. The burgeoning conviction that she is carrying a bird around in her stomach alters the entire experience of the hunt, and drives her to confront her fears about growing older and shedding her tomboy skin.

Bird Dog is short film about changing roles within a family and the strength that comes from an imagination run wild. Shooting this fall in Wyoming, the project is being produced as writer/director's Katrina Whalen's thesis project for NYU Graduate Film.

**FORMAT :** Live Action & Stop-Motion Animation

**LENGTH :** 20 minutes

**BUDGET :** \$35,000

**SHOOTING DATES :** September, 2014

**SHOOTING LOCATIONS :** Converse & Natrona Counties, Wyoming

**CREW SIZE :** 12 members

**CAST SIZE :** 6 actors, 10-15 extras

**INSURANCE COVERAGE :** Covered by NYU's Film School policy - \$1,000,000 coverage

**SPONSORS :** New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Crack Shot Films

**AWARDS :** NYU Fusion Festival's Best Graduate Short Screenplay, 2014

## Writer / Director's Statement

This is me, back around 1987. I grew up in Casper, Wyoming, a small city that sits where the Great Plains meets the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Like many families in Wyoming, mine went out on the occasional hunting trip. We had two well-bred dogs who, unfortunately, both failed out of hunting school. One was gun shy, the other was just not interested. So, as I was the youngest member of my family (one not particularly able to or interested in firing guns), I decided the best solution would be to serve as my dad's human bird dog.



I'd go out with him on the annual bird hunts, walk through the harvested wheat fields, wait for him to shoot a bird. I would run out into the open landscape, find the bird, and retrieve it. It was a wonderful way to explore new terrains, and a great way to bond with him and the other families along for the trip. And I thought this was totally normal - at least until I went out beyond the state lines and told some friends about it. They were suitably shocked and confused.

A few months ago, after a conversation with a young niece of mine, I started thinking about my old bird-dogging days. I'm now a graduate student at New York University's film school, finishing up a degree in writing and directing. Over the last few years I've been increasingly interested in the telling of western stories, and this strange perspective on life and death seemed to me like something to explore. I sat down and wrote an early draft of the script for 'Bird Dog' - a script from the perspective of a young girl who is eagerly witnessing this western way of life and discovering the ways that families come together around such traditions. Drawing inspiration from such films



as Robert Mulligan's 'To Kill a Mockinbird', Ken Loach's 'Kes', Lynne Ramsay's 'Ratcatcher', and Victor Erice's 'Spirit of the Beehive', it is a coming of age story that develops outside of those more commonly shown in our current culture, an important one that I believe needs to be told.

I'm now very excited by the opportunity to bring this script to life. I'm looking forward to creating the imaginative perspective of the main character of Rose, using both live action narrative and stopmotion animation. And most importantly, I am thrilled to be working with my friends and family to shoot the film in the same locations that originally gave birth to this story.

## The Team

### **Director: Katrina Whalen**



Originally from Wyoming, Katrina Whalen is an independent filmmaker now based in New York. While attending Yale University as an undergraduate, she was awarded the school's top prize for her work in filmmaking and animation. She has spent the last ten years working in film, television, and web production around the country, with a resume as a factotum that includes work on 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind', 'Synecdoche, New York', Julie Taymor's 'The Tempest', 'Jimmy P: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian', and the indie circuit hit 'Fort Tilden'. She is currently enrolled as a Dean's Fellow in NYU's Graduate Film Program. Her own short films have played at festivals from Los Angeles to Istanbul.

### **Producer: Mollye Asher**



Mollye Asher is a NY based independent Producer and Director. Her feature producing debut Faith, Love, and Whiskey, premiered at the 2012 Slamdance Film Festival and won Best Narrative Feature at the 2012 Dallas International Film Festival. Most recently, Mollye is the producer of Fort Tilden, which won the Grand Jury Prize at SXSW 2014 and the Special Jury Prize at the IFFBoston. She is also a producer on She's Lost Control which had its World Premiere at the 2014 Berlinale, US Premiere at the 2014 SXSW and NY Premiere at the New Directors/ New Films. Mollye is a Film Independent Fast Track Fellow, IFP Narrative Lab fellow and an alumni of the NYU Graduate Film program.

### **Production Designer: Laura Moss**



Laura Moss has worked as a designer and special effects artist for the past seven years. She has worked for HBO, MTV, CBS, The History Channel and Nickelodeon. Laura is also the artistic director of Quo Vadimus Arts, a non-profit organization dedicated to cross-cultural exchange. She has lived in Jerusalem where she worked for the Palestinian National Theatre. Laura is an M.F.A. candidate at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and has designed films and commercials in New York, Louisiana, and the Czech Republic.



## Timeline

### Pre-Production

June - August 2014 .....	Project Development & Fundraising
August 2014 .....	Location Scouting, Casting in Wyoming

### Production

September 3-7 .....	Tech Scout
September 8-16 .....	Principal Photography

### Post-Production

September 19 .....	Editorial Begins
October 2014 .....	Shooting Animation Sequences
November 5 .....	Rough Cut Finished
December 3 .....	Final Cut Finished
December 13 .....	Final Sound Mix & Color Correction
January 10 .....	First Public Screening (NYU)

## Distribution Plan

The most common place for a short film to run is in a shorts program at a film festival. Many of the thesis films made in the graduate program at NYU have gone on to play and win awards at some of the most prestigious festivals around the world, including Cannes, Venice, Sundance, for examples.

Based on the content and tone of the film, I have compiled a list of festivals to target upon completion of 'Whiskey 'n Ditch'.

- o Sundance - January 2015
- o New York International Children's Film Festival - February 2015
- o Lincoln Center's New Films New Voices Program - March 2015
- o SXSW (Austin) - March 2015
- o First Run Festival (NYU) - June 2015
- o Wyoming Film Festival - August 2015
- o Jackson Hole Film Festival - September 2015
- o Hatchfest (Montana) - October 2015
- o Indie Memphis Film Festival - November 2015

Building a support base through an online presence ([www.bar-oh-w.com](http://www.bar-oh-w.com)) will be important in building support for this film as it moves out into the world. This online presence will make use of other online venues, such as [mubi.com](http://mubi.com), [vimeo.com](http://vimeo.com), and [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), perfect ways of building buzz for the finished product.



# Production Budget

## Bird Dog Budget

Director: Katrina Whalen  
 Producer: Mollye Asher

UNIONS: SAG Student Short  
 Camera: Red  
 8 days

Acct#	Category Description	Page	Total
1000	Story and Rights	1	\$0
1100	Producers	1	\$0
1200	Directors	1	\$0
1300	Talent	1	\$1,200
1400	Actor Travel	2	\$1,300
<b>Total Above-The-Line</b>			<b>\$2,500</b>
1600	Production Staff	3	\$0
1800	Camera	3	\$2,880
1900	Wardrobe	3	\$450
2000	Makeup and Hairdressing	4	\$850
2300	Art Department	4	\$1,820
2600	Sound	4	\$260
2700	Electric	5	\$1,200
2800	Set Operation	5	\$1,490
3000	Special Effect	6	\$0
3100	Locations	6	\$5,395
3200	Transportation	6	\$6,638
3300	Animals	7	\$0
3400	Lodging	7	\$1,200
3500	Animation Sequence	7	\$1,750
<b>Total Production</b>			<b>\$23,933</b>
3400	Editing	8	\$1,000
3500	Music	8	\$800
3600	Post Production Sound	8	\$750
3700	Post Production Film & Lab	8	\$850
3800	Titles & Opticals	8	\$0
<b>Total Post Production</b>			<b>\$3,400</b>
3900	Insurance	9	\$500
4000	Publicity	9	\$750
4200	General Expense	9	\$0
<b>Total Other</b>			<b>\$1,250</b>
	Contingency : 7.0%		\$2,194
<b>Total Above-The-Line</b>			<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Total Below-The-Line</b>			<b>\$28,583</b>
<b>Total Above and Below-The-Line</b>			<b>\$31,083</b>
<b>Total Fringes</b>			<b>\$264</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>\$33,542</b>

## **Financial Support**

Bird Dog has the full support of the NYU faculty. This prestigious program is supplying advisement, camera equipment, production package insurance, and post-production facilities.

However, thesis films in NYU's graduate program are all self-funded projects. We are in need of funds to help us meet our budget numbers, and are currently searching for patrons and executive producers to provide funding for the project.

### **Financial Donations**

Financial donations can be made directly to the filmmaker's business account, which is being used to provide funds for the project as laid out in the budget section of this prospectus.

To make a donation please make your check made payable to KATRINA WHALEN - BANK OF JACKSON HOLE FILM ACCOUNT, and mail it to:

Katrina Whalen  
PO Box 365  
Wilson, WY 83014

### **In-Kind Donations**

You can also help by donating supplies or in-kind support to the project. Donations such as these are vital to the success of the production:

- Food and lodging for the 6 cast and 12 crew members
- Transportation to and from set
- Additional equipment for the shoot
- Wardrobe and or props relevant to the western setting
- Spend a day with the crew as an extra - men, women, children, and dogs welcome!

We thank you for taking the time to consider supporting Bird Dog. Please don't hesitate to contact the director with any questions.

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