

## CAT LADIES

*“When cats mean MEOW to you than people.”*

CAT LADIES is a one hour verité documentary that unravels the real story behind the oft-ridiculed ‘cat lady’ - a cultural stereotype and figure of ridicule for women of a certain age with too many furry companions. Through the intimate portrait of four unique ‘cat ladies’ we create a sensitive and emotionally honest portrait of women whose lives and self-worth have become intractably linked to cats.

It’s not the number of cats that defines someone as a ‘cat lady’, but rather their attachment, or non-attachment, to human beings. They create a world with their cats in which they are accepted and in control - a world where they ultimately have value.

**Margot’s** universe revolves round her three cats – Bongo, Fritz and Little One. She skips work to stay at home with them and has re-designed her entire apartment to accommodate them. But the love and connection she gets from her cats is also getting in the way of her developing any relationships with human beings - and it’s only through tragedy that she can glimpse an alternative.

In her mid 30s, **Jenny** appears to have it all – an attractive, fiercely independent sales agent with her own home that she just happens to share with 16 cats. It’s not that she wouldn’t want to find a partner or have children, but the experiences she endured as a child have prevented her from having healthy adult relationships. Jenny knows she’s on the cusp of becoming “the Crazy Cat Lady”. All it would take is a few more cats...

**Diane** is a vivacious former banker whose early and un-wanted retirement turned her to a life of saving cats from the streets. Now, she’s sharing her home with 123 felines and when she’s not feeding, cleaning and nursing them she’s feeding and trapping feral cats in the wild. Diane wants to stop – but the thought of a cat starving or suffering breaks her heart. It’s also ruining her health, sucking her bank account dry and alienating her from friends and family.

**Sigi** is on a mission to save cats. Like Diane, she’s turned her house over to hundreds of the furry creatures, but unlike Diane she’s unapologetic about her choices. If women like her didn’t take matters into their own hands, who else would? Sigi’s mission isn’t one that her neighbours are buying into – the acrid smell and noise is an intolerable toll on anyone living close by – but Sigi’s been a fighter all her life and being on the margins only makes her more defiant.

Women like Margot, Jenny, Diane and Sigi are easily dismissed as “crazy cat ladies”, but these women deal with the issues that all of us face to some degree – alienation, loss and loneliness in a society that devalues the “different”.

## **Cat Ladies Production Notes**

Originally developed in 2007

Development supported by TVO in 2007

Production supported by TVO, Canal D with participation from CanWest Hot Docs Completion Fund, Canadian Television Fund and with assistance from Canada Film or Video Tax credits and Ontario Film and Television Tax credits

Pre-production Summer 2008

Principal photography commenced September 2008

Post-production Winter 2008

Shot on Sony EX1, XDCAM – 1080p, 30fps

Edited on FCP HD

Production days: 19

Shot on location in Toronto and surrounding area, and Kitchener-Waterloo.

### **CHRISTIE CALLAN-JONES – DIRECTOR**

Christie Callan-Jones is an award-winning director with an impressive list of blue chip

documentary series already under her belt. CAT LADIES is her first foray into independent one-off documentary.

Most recently Callan-Jones co-directed season three of the highly celebrated Showcase original series *Webdreams*. Before *Webdreams*, she directed an array of highly regarded network series, including *X-Weighted* (Slice), *Things That Move* (History Television) and *Opening Soon* (Food Network).

Callan-Jones's film, *Turning Points of History: Deadly Water Minamata* (History Television), which she wrote and directed, received several awards including: the Silver Hugo winner at the Chicago International Television Awards, the Special Jury Prize Houston WorldFest, the Silver Medal winner at the New York International Film and Video Festival and the Bronze Plaque winner at Columbus International Film and Video Festival. Her first film, *Turning Points of History: Misbehavin'*, was awarded the Platinum winner at Houston Worldfest International Film Festival.

Callan-Jones is a native of Ottawa and graduated with an honours degree in history from Queen's University.

## **Christie Callan-Jones Filmography**

### **Director**

1. Cat Ladies (2008) (in production) (TVO, Canal D, ichannel)
2. Webdreams Season 3 (2008) (Showcase)
3. X-Weighted (2007) (Slice)
4. Ancestors In the Attic (2006) (History Television Canada)
5. Things That Move (2006) (History Television Canada)
6. Deadly Water: Minamata (History Television Canada) (2005)
7. Opening Soon (2005) (Slice)
8. Misbehavin' (2004) (History Television Canada)

## Writer

1. Ancestors in the Attic (2006) (History Television Canada)
2. Things That Move (2006) (History Television Canada)
3. Deadly Water: Minamata (History Television Canada) (2005)
4. Misbehavin' (2004) (History Television Canada)
5. Green Force (2007) (Slice)
6. Underworld History: Montreal (2006) (National Geographic US)
7. Science Freaks (2003) (Discovery Canada)

## PRODUCER

Jeannette Loakman is an award-winning producer with over 12 years of experience in the television industry. Jeannette was recently nominated for a Gemini for ***Spam: The Documentary***, a critical and ratings hit, ***Spam*** is the story of one man's comical search for the origins of bulk unsolicited email. Pitched at TDF 2006 and produced with CBC Newsworld, Court TV USA, Knowledge Network, Canal D, YLE Finland and SBS Australia, it is distributed by Films Transit, and is selling worldwide - putting ***Spam*** on the map.

As well as ***Cat Ladies*** and ***Spam***, her productions include the series ***Groomed*** - with world famous butler Paul Hogan – for W Network and Wedding TV (UK). This entertaining male makeover show was called “*Surprisingly endearing*”, by the Globe and Mail, “*Just short of magic!*” by the Calgary Sun, and featured on Pick of the Week by The Guardian in the UK. Jeannette produced ***Annie Ong: Lost and Found***, ***Hot Shots***, ***The Last Seven Days of Annie Ong*** as well as directed ***Slippery Blisses: What's in a Kiss?*** with the NFB.

Jeannette also co-founded ***Moc Docs*** – an annual national mockumentary filmmaking competition that over five years took over 30 filmmakers from script to the television screen and the festival circuit.

Jeannette's experience in the industry includes a stint in programming at Vision TV, general reporter for CityNews on City TV, and host of WTN's first show: POV Women. Her work in the business was preceded by a decade in IT travelling the globe as a software consultant.

If Jeannette were a rockstar she'd be Angus in AC/DC....

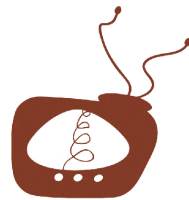
If Jeannette were an ice cream flavour she'd be pistachio and mint.

If Jeannette were a Bond girl she'd be the one with the villain that lasts till the end... well almost.

### **Jeannette Loakman**

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## **FILMOGRAPHY**

### **2009**

*Executive Producer*

### **PEEP ME**

Why are we tripping over ourselves to get on reality television, post intimate secrets online, or drop our drawers for amateur non-profit porn? A never-ending spectacle of bodies and souls are willing to bare all for entertainment, self-betterment, and instantaneous recognition – think Reality television, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, CCTV, and more. Pop culture has become “peep”. We’ve traded privacy for notoriety and reinvented mass culture. Voyeuristic, narcissistic, exhibitionist, invasive, banal, totally immersive and addictive: are we committing suicide with our privacy? Or is this need to “peep” propelling us into a panoptican utopia? Part of a cross-platform project, Peep Me explores peep’s implications on society, sex, politics, and everyday life, through the quirky painfully personal journey of Hal Niedzviecki, as he reveals himself and others.

In production with CBC Newsworld and Canal D

### **2008**

*Executive Producer*

**CAT LADIES** is a verité documentary that pierces the intimate world of the “cat lady” – women who give and seek love in their world with their cats. Four different women who have been slapped with the same label: “The Crazy Cat Lady”. Through intimate access with Diane, Margot, Sigi and Jenny, we create a sensitive and emotionally honest portrait of women whose lives and self-worth have become intractably linked to cats. Some of these women have only a few cats; others share their small homes with hundreds. They’ve created an alternative society for themselves that they share with their feline companions. It’s not however, the number of cats they possess that defines them, but rather their struggle to find acceptance and value in a society that rejects them. A figure of fun, they’re easily dismissed but these women deal with the issues that all of us face to some degree – rejection, loss and loneliness.

Produced with TVO, Canal D, ichannel

**2006**

*Executive Producer*

*SPAM: The Documentary*

If you have a mailbox, you have spam. Meet Dave. He’d like to improve himself – but he’s not into hard work. But he is into the internet and everyday receives friendly emails offering to help him. What if Dave took up these amazing deals? Jumping down the proverbial rabbit-hole, on his quest to get to the bottom of spam, Dave meets a Python, investigates the secret control room of AOL, learns about cyber forensics, tracks down a spammer, and uncovers the real threat of spam.

Oh, and tries to improve his life.

Produced with CBC, Court TV USA, Knowledge Network, Canal D, YLE Finland and SBS Australia

**2005**

*Executive Producer*

**GROOMED**

**Groomed** is a Cinderella story for men. Paul Hogan, “America’s Butler”, our host and world renown Gentleman’s Gentleman, takes one loveable “diamond in the rough” and transforms him into the polished gentleman he yearns to be – all for the love of his life. **Groomed** is the story of Prince Charming - told from the perspective of the Frog.

Produced with W Network

## **2004**

Executive Producer

### **Hot Shots**

“The Great Canadian Ad challenge” – produced in collaboration with Rogers Hi-Speed Internet and Yahoo! This was a national competition to write and produce a 60-second commercial for the new Rogers-Yahoo internet services. 8 spots won the competition and were featured both on the website and 2 were shown on television.

## **2003/2004**

*Producer*

### **Annie Ong: Lost and Found**

Imagine being found by one’s birth mother through an Internet search, then meeting her and your three sisters. Then imagine having to break the news to your adoptive mother. A documentary on finding one’s birth family, having two mothers and then trying to keep them both.

Produced in association with CBC with participation from Telefilm Canada

Broadcast on CBC Passionate Eye, May 2004

## **2001-2004**

*Executive Producer*

### **Moc Docs**

Co-founder and creator of Moc Docs, the national “mockumentary” film contest. Winning scripts went from page to screen in under a month, were premiered at the 2001, 2002 and 2003 Hot Docs International Documentary Festival and subsequently broadcast on CBC Newsworld Rough Cuts, CBC Canadian Reflections and Zed. Showcased around the world in various festivals including the Just For Laughs Festival, Raindance Film Festival (London), New York Comedy Festival, Vancouver Film Festival, Montreal Film Festival and others.

Produced in association with CBC with participation from OMDC, Telefilm Canada, SODEC, NSFDC

## **1998-2000**

*Director*

### **Slippery Blisses / What's In a Kiss?**

A one hour documentary that takes an amusing and educational look at the cultural, historical, romantic, scientific and sociological aspects of kissing. Narrated by Kim Catrall, it premiered on The Documentary Channel (Canada) and Discovery Health (USA).

Produced by the National Film Board.

**1995/1998**

*Producer/Director*

### **Mothers of Reinvention**

A one-hour documentary looking at how women are reshaping the new South Africa from the grassroots level.

Broadcast on VISION TV and WTN. Produced in association with Vision TV and NFB.

**1995**

*Producer*

### **The Last Seven Days of Annie Ong**

A half-hour documentary on the search by a trans-racial adoptee (me) for her birth mother in South-East Asia. Broadcast on WTN and VISION TV and internationally.

**Winner of the Golden Award at the Los Angeles Asian American Film and Video Festival 1999.**

Produced in association with WTN.

### **Sally Blake**

**Sally Blake** has 12 years of experience in the radio and television industry as a writer, director, editor and producer.

She cut her filmmaking teeth in the bizarre world of professional wrestling, co-producing the Gemini-award winning documentary feature, "HITMAN HART, wrestling with

shadows” and the A&E Biography follow-up “The Life and Death of Owen Hart”. Blake continues to make films exploring day to day life from extreme and unusual perspectives, including “Offstage”, a Guffmanesque peek inside the world of amateur theatre, and “The Disciples”, a revealing behind-the-scenes tale of power and profit in the world of Christian rock ‘n’ roll. Two years ago Sally took a mule across the Italian alps to re-trace Leonardo Da Vinci’s epic voyage to France, the subject of her upcoming documentary “Leonardo’s Last Journey”. Currently she is directing the documentary/interactive cross-over project **Peep Me** an examination of society’s changing attitudes towards identity and privacy in the world of reality TV, YouTube and Facebook.

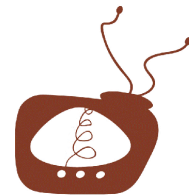
Sally Blake is 35 years old and lives in Toronto. Her unrequited ambition is to land the role of a kung fu fighting Bond Girl – a role she is hopelessly unqualified for.

Sally Blake

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## FILMOGRAPHY

2009

*Executive Producer & Director*

PEEP ME (1 hr documentary)

Why are we tripping over ourselves to get on reality television, post intimate secrets online, or drop our drawers for amateur non-profit porn? Peep Me explores peep’s implications on society, sex, politics, and everyday life, through the quirky painfully personal journey of Hal Niedzviecki, as he reveals himself and others.

In production with CBC Newsworld and Canal D

2008/09

*Creative Producer & Editor*

CAT LADIES (1 hr documentary)

A verite documentary that pierces the intimate world of the “cat lady” – women who give and seek love in their world with their cats. A figure of fun, they’re easily dismissed but these women deal with the issues that all of us face to some degree – rejection, loss and loneliness.

Produced with TVO, Canal D, ichannel

2008/09

*Writer, director, editor*

Leonardo’s Last Voyage (Feature length documentary)

Retracing Leonardo Da Vinci’s final voyage across the alps on a mule, from Italy to France, where he transported the Mona Lisa and eventually died a few years later.

*In post-production*

2006

*Executive Producer*

SPAM: The Documentary

An exploration into the quirky world of bulk, unsolicited email.

Nominated for Best Science Documentary, Gemini Awards 2007

Produced with CBC, Court TV USA, Knowledge Network, Canal D, YLE Finland and SBS Australia

2005

*Executive Producer, Series Director, Writer*

GROOMED

Groomed is a Cinderella story for men. Paul Hogan, “America’s Butler”, our host and world renown Gentleman’s Gentleman, takes one loveable “diamond in the rough” and transforms him into the polished gentleman he yearns to be – all for the love of his life. Groomed is the story of Prince Charming - told from the perspective of the Frog.

Produced with W Network, Wedding TV

2004

*Executive Producer*

Hot Shots

“The Great Canadian Ad challenge” – produced in collaboration with Rogers Hi-Speed Internet and Yahoo! This was a national competition to write and produce a 60-second commercial for the new Rogers-Yahoo internet services. 8 spots won the competition and were featured both on the website and 2 were shown on television.

2002/2003

*Producer/Director*

Offstage

One-hour documentary following the exploits of an amateur theatre group in the small oil town of Petrolia, Ontario. A very small films production for the Life Network with the participation of Telefilm CTF.

Nominated for Golden Sheaf Award at Yorkton Short Film Festival.

Gold Plaque Winner “Arts/Humanities” at Chicago International Television Awards.

2002

*Episode Director*

The Ex-Files

Thirteen part series that reunites subjects with their ex lovers. Produced by PTV for WTN and Discovery Health US.

2002

*Producer/ Director/ Editor*

Suite & Simple

Thirteen part travel series examining travel from both ends of the pocketbook: luxurious vs. bargain. Hosted by Michael Lamport (Bob & Margaret) and Krista Sutton (American Psycho, Vagina Monologues).

A very small films production for CTV and CTV Travel.

2001/ 2002/ 2003 / 2004

*Executive Producer*

Moc Docs

Ongoing series of comedic 'mockumentary' films. Premiered at the 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Film Festival and subsequently broadcast on CBC Newsworld's 'Rough Cuts', CBC Canadian Reflections and Zed. Showcased around the world in various festivals including the Just For Laughs Festival, Raindance Film Festival (London), New York Comedy Festival, Vancouver Film Festival, Montreal Film Festival and others.

Produced in association with CBC and with the participation of OMDC, Telefilm Canada, SODEC, NSFDC

2001

*Co-Producer/ Director/ Writer*

The Disciples

One-hour documentary about the pop culture phenomenon of Christian rock and entertainment. Following a young Canadian band as they travel to Nashville, the film details the spiritual and ethical conflict inherent to a world where evangelical religion and big business are inextricably mixed. A very small films production for CBC Witness with the participation of Telefilm Canada and Netherlands Broadcasting.

Nominated by the Canadian Association of Journalists for Best Open Television Program.

2001

*Executive Producer*

Life's a Twitch

Half hour documentary film on the extraordinary life of a man struggling with Tourettes Syndrome.

Produced for TV Ontario with the participation of the Ontario Media Development Corporation.

Nominated for Best Science Documentary, Gemini Awards 2003

2000

*Writer/ Producer*

The Right to Play

1 hr documentary that follows four exceptional Olympians into the heart of Eritrea as they struggle to rebuild from the ruins of war and prepare to send their first athletic delegation to the Olympic Games.

A very small films production for CBC Sports, with the assistance of CIDA.

1999

*Co-director, writer and producer*

The Life and Death of Owen Hart

1 hr biographical documentary on Canadian pro-wrestler Owen Hart. The film details the life of Bret Hart's lesser-known brother and the tragic consequences of his fallout with a wrestling federation fuelled by greed and television ratings. Produced for TVO, A&E Biography and A-Channel.

Winner of the people's choice selection for A&E Biographies of the year.

1997-1999

*Producer*

The Machine Gun

3 x 1hr documentary series on the socio-political and technical development of the machine gun and how it changed the course of human history. Produced for The Discovery Channel and Discovery Canada.

1997-1998

*Co-Producer*

HITMAN HART, wrestling with shadows

Feature documentary on the dramatic story of Canadian pro-wrestler, Bret Hart. Produced for TVO, A&E, BBC, Arté and A-Channel. Selected Awards: Gemini, Best Documentary in the history/biography category; Hot Docs, Best of the Festival

1997

*Producer, Writer*

Half Asleep, Half Alive

1 hr documentary on sleep disorders for the Discovery Canada Series 'The Body, Inside Stories'.

1996-1997

*Producer, Writer*

Discovery Debates

2 x 1hr scientific debates featuring Jay Ingram as host and filmed at York University with a live audience.

Produced for Discovery Canada.