



THE BEE MAN

THE MAN WHO CAN TALK TO HONEYBEES.



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SHORT DOCUMENTARY SYNOPSIS



ONE LINE SYNOPSIS (LOGLINE)

A local conservationist saves an unwanted swarm of bees from extermination using his gift; the ability to communicate with honeybees.

ONE PARAGRAPH SYNOPSIS

The Beeman follows an eccentric conservationist on a mission to save an unwanted swarm of bees from a neighbourhood backyard, and relocate them to a honeybee sanctuary in the hills of Perth. But this conservationist isn't like the other bee men in the area, he has a deep, spiritual connection to the local honeybee population, who he believes once ruled planet earth. *The Beeman* is a character profile of a man left of centre, with a wealth of knowledge about honeybees and a bigger message of their importance to the fragile ecosystem of the backyards they choose to call their home.

ONE PAGE SYNOPSIS

Carl Maxwell is affectionately known as "The Beeman", a title he takes very seriously. Carl has created a buzz around town, by being on call whenever a home is invaded by an unwanted swarm of bees. Carl isn't like the other bee men in the area; he has a deep, spiritual connection to the honeybee population, who he believes to be higher beings. Carl is repulsed by exterminators who use pesticides to murder bees, a creature crucial to the fragile ecosystem of the world.

The Beeman follows Carl on a relocation mission, where a bee colony has swarmed underneath a grate of a front yard. Donning his ominous blue protective suit, Carl 'smokes out' the hive to distract the bees, then flips the grate open, revealing a canary yellow beehive. Face-to-face with the bees, in a thick, ambiguous European accent, Carl professes his love to the hive, reassuring them that they won't be harmed. It's here we realise Carl has a special relationship with the bees, a relationship that makes him better at this job than any others like him; the bees know him and he can understand bee language.

Carl removes his protective gear, and somehow miraculously avoids being stung as he takes apart the hive, placing the honey combs into a styrofoam box. All the while, philosophises a mythical world that is entirely ruled by bees. After the removal Carl drives the hive to a sanctuary in the Perth hills. While the bees make themselves at home amongst the trees, Carl talks about a lifelong dream of becoming a bee. No matter how many of their characteristics he embodies, he was always missing that one thing. He wasn't able to fly. So, in order to gain the bees respect, he must learn to fly.

Carl takes off in a motorised paraglide and soars through the blue sky as he reflects on the beauty of the bee, and what a marvellous gift it is to become it. *The Beeman* is a character profile of a man left of centre, with a wealth of knowledge about honeybees and a bigger message of their importance to the world. While the audience might initially be amused by Carl's devotion to the bees, by the end of the documentary they will realise there are worse things to worship, than bees.

PRODUCER - CODY GREENWOOD



Cody Greenwood is a producer of factual & drama content. Cody started her career in London making music video and brand content, before moving across to LA to join Heath Ledger's production company, The Masses. In LA she production managed music videos, short film content and developed TV projects for MTV and other US networks.

She has production managed multiple TV series (Family Rules, From The Western Frontier, Light), feature documentary (The Kimberley Project) and TV documentary projects (Shark Hunters, The Third Space, Owing Your History, Angela's Rules, Fighter, Whadjuk to Wadjemup) for broadcasters such as The Discovery Channel, ABC2, SBS and NITV.

She most recently co-produced two half-hour episodes in the third series of From The Western Frontier, produced two short films Abduction & Cover and a short documentary entitled The Beeman which will premiere at Perth Revelation International Film Festival.

Cody has been selected for the Screen Producers Australia 2018 Ones To Watch program. She is also a committee member of Women In Film & TV (WIFT) Western Australia.

CO-WRITER/DIRECTOR - FRANCES ELLIOTT



Frances Elliott is a 26-year-old filmmaker who has an unwavering passion for telling stories. Her work often explores themes of female repression, feminism and giving a voice to those squashed by the patriarchy, and has recently been elected onto the board for WIFT 2018 (Women in Film and Television) for her efforts.

Entering the industry as a video editor in 2011, she has worked for both broadcasters and independent film and documentary, transitioning into writing and directing for drama and factual content in recent years. Her direction has won her 'Best Film' and 'Audience Choice Award' at Perth's Revel-8 (Revelation Film Festival), and her writing has been selected for The Bill Warnock Initiative, and shortlisted her from over 1000 applicants across Australia for 'Smart For a Girl; Roar.'

Frances is currently co-writing/directing a short documentary funded by The City of Vincent Film Project, and a feature documentary on gender reassignment. Both documentaries are being made in collaboration with producer Cody Greenwood and co-writer/director Samantha Marlowe; the trio want to advance their careers as a team, as working with empowered, strong women is where they feel the most creatively free.

CO-WRITER/DIRECTOR - SAMANTHA MARLOWE



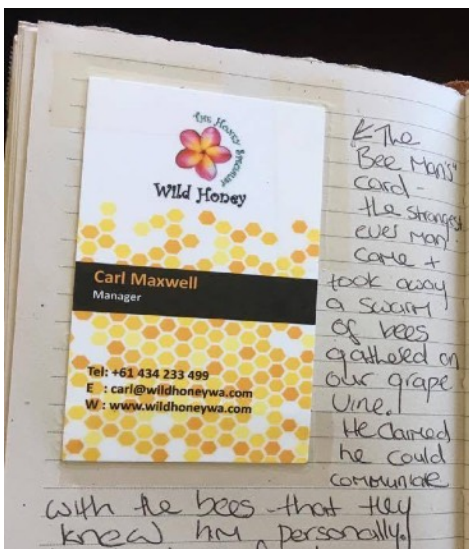
Samantha Marlowe is an emerging documentary writer & director, who kickstarted her career as a video editor in TV news. Samantha's love of documentary led her to study journalism and film, where she wrote and directed several pieces that featured on the ATOM nominated NITV series, Noongar Dandjoo. The personal connections she made during the series influenced her belief that documentary can inspire social change.

An advocate for women's rights, Samantha is a committee member for the WA branch of Women in Film & Television. With experience in broadcast TV, Samantha has worked on projects ranging from current affairs, live performances and documentary series'. In 2016 she was awarded runner up "Best News Editor" for the Channel 9 ANZAC day special "The Battle of Long Tan".

Currently, Samantha is co-writing/directing a short documentary funded by The City of Vincent Film Fund and feature documentary on gender reassignment, with co-director Frances Elliott and producer Cody Greenwood. The trio plans to continue growing creatively as a team of strong, female filmmakers.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

A lighthearted, colourful documentary that doesn't take itself too seriously; *The Beeman* follows the eccentric conservationist and self proclaimed 'Beeman' Carl Maxwell as he relocates a honeybee hive. In the same vein as *Grizzly Man*, but with the vibrant style of David Attenborough's *Planet Earth*, Carl's quirky character and buzz-arre relationship with the bees draws the audience in with comedy, but ultimately translates a broader message; that there are worse things in life to worship, than bees.



Frances Elliott (Co-Writer/Director): *I was living in a rental home North of Perth when I first met The Beeman. I walked into my backyard, only to discover thousands of roaring bees were swarming a grape vine just meters from where I stood. I immediately took to google for help - and stumbled upon a man named Carl, or "The Beeman" - who customers described as stranger than fiction, and religious about the bees he was saving. Carl was at my house within the hour, climbing up a ladder and sticking his face directly into the newly formed hive without protective gear. Once face-to-face with the bees, in a thick, ambiguous accent Carl professed his love to the hive, reassuring them that they*

wouldn't be harmed. 3, 2, 1, BANG - Carl had severed the hive from grape vine, which fell into a box, and the job was done.

While the bees softly buzzed, safe in the box, Carl took the time to explain that these bees would be relocated to an orchard in the hills - a place that would be mutually beneficial to the honeybees, and the farmer who's crops they would pollinate. The Beeman also spoke of the special relationship he had with bees in they area; they knew him. He could understand bee language, communicate with them, and they too could talk to him. Remembering that he somehow managed to relocate the hive without pesticides or getting stung, it was difficult not to believe him. As he left my house and began his journey up into the hills, I knew that I had to soak up this majestic character and put him on screen. I glued his business card into my diary, and eventually pitched the idea to co-director Samantha Marlowe and Producer Cody Greenwood, who were mutually interested in the strange man who claimed he could talk to bees.

Fast paced and observational style, *The Beeman* was shot entirely handheld over the space of two consecutive days. Like Carl on a relocation mission, the documentary doesn't sit down. Instead, we chose to interview Carl in-situ throughout the process, allowing him to deliver information to the audience while elbows deep in a beehive. Whether it was remaining focused on Carl's expression when he first met the hive, or strapping the go-pro to his plane so we could see his face as he flew, we knew the intimate shooting style with a central focus on character would be crucial to reveal the unique and special relationship that Carl has with the bees.



Samantha Marlowe (Co-Writer/Director): *My approach to the interviewing process has always been to ensure our subjects don't feel judged in any way. If our subjects can feel our empathy and understanding, they can relax and feel safe to express themselves genuinely. With Carl, his eccentricities made him an incredibly captivating character, but they also came with their challenges. Whether it was in depth tangents about how bees once ruled planet Earth, or the shaky and less than perfect take off from Carl's motorised paraglider, we never knew what to expect. Characters like Carl, don't necessarily respond well to be "directed" and because of this we adjusted accordingly, allowing a certain level of unstructured fluidity to the shoot days. With my co-director Frances Elliott taking care of the technical direction, I was able to devote my time towards keeping our colourful "Beeman" on an even-keel, encouraging him to share his gift but also by gently reminding him that his message about the bees had the ability to have a broader impact on society.*

Shot in the heart of summer time, *The Beeman* showcases the blue skies and blooming flowers of Western Australia. Colour played an important role, illuminating all of the things bees have gifted us. We wanted bright, saturated, almost cartoonish colours accentuated in the colour grade - with a focus on prime colours, especially yellows and blues. The editing style is playful, lingering on awkward dad-jokes too long, never taking itself too seriously, and pairing moments of quiet reflectiveness with bursts of action to get bursts of laughter. This style was backed up by bright yellow, hand drawn titles to enhance the small scale, personal story that it is, and scored by a soundtrack that reflects our loveable yet peculiar central character.

As filmmakers, we were deeply fascinated and privileged to come a little closer to understanding *The Beeman* and all of his eccentricities. Ultimately, our objective for the documentary was to provide a deeper insight into Carl, his relationship with honeybees and his outlook on the world. While the audience might initially be amused by Carl's devotion, by the end of the documentary they realise that there are far worse things in life to worship than bees - a creature crucial to the ecosystem of planet earth. Although our filmmaking team was small, we hope that this message will have a big impact on the world. And in the words of *The Beeman* himself:

"Life is like being as little as a bee, and as big as no limits".



END CREDITS

Written & Directed by
FRANCES ELLIOTT & SAMANTHA MARLOWE

Producer
CODY GREENWOOD

Executive Producer
ASHLEIGH NICOLAU

Director of Photography
LEWIS POTTS

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THANKS TO
Carl Maxwell, Dean Fliwkier, Leigh Barton, Joseph Becker, Josh Houwelling, Arthur
Bienkowski

Music
Courtesy of Audio Network

The Beeman

END CREDITS CONT.

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In association with Revelation Perth International Film Festival



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