

MEDIA KIT

A Neon Pictures Production

Produced with assistance from
The New South Wales Film and Television Office

DOG

Starring:

Don Walker as 'The Dog'
Leo Sayer as 'The Critter'
Dave Graney as 'The Man'

Written and Animated by
Dan Creighton

Music by
King Curly

Sound Design by
Steve Appel & Steve Francis

Recorded and Mixed at NIKINALI

Produced by
Chris Murray

Associate producers:
Peter Taylor and Diana Sparke

"Dreams Come True"
Appel/Creighton
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Thanks to:

Valerie Allerton, S'haila Bernard, Stu Connolly,
Diana and Neil Creighton, Richard Martin, Splutterfish, TV1

S YNOPSIS

"Snoopy Meets Bad Lieutenant in the surreal world of the animated short, "DOG".



"DOG" takes place in a world that is dead, ravaged by a war so ancient that the only movements are convulsive flickers of memory; flak bursts in the sky, trucks transport fresh soldiers to the front. But the artillery is unmanned, and the soldiers being transported to the front were skeletons long, long ago.

The main characters are a dog, a critter, and an old man.

"DOG" is an animated short that draws lovingly from the conventions of the form's 1940's heyday; a violent dog, a sidekick, a villain. European folk-tales, the moral ambiguity of '40s noir and the Book of Job were other wellsprings of inspiration.

There are two worlds in "DOG"; a sterile landscape of desert and ruined overpasses haunted by the memory of war, and a terrible sunless nether land haunted by singing fish...and other things. Both owe a debt to the landscape of Scotland's industrial belt.

Whilst the relationships in "DOG" are intended to be ambiguous, the Dog's journey is motivated by the possibility of hope, and the narrative hangs around an unlikely friendship formed under unfortunate circumstances.

The characters are voiced by rock-luminaries; Don Walker, Dave Graney, Leo Sayer. The authority and stature these legends- at least two of which are sadly underrated in their own country - lent a bedrock conviction to the characters as solid as a metal desk.

Cult-band "King Curly" provide the soundtrack; their songs have been described as sounding, "as though they have beamed in from alternate pop-dimensions", and certainly their work on "DOG" is hauntingly beautiful.

Director's statement

There is a long and not necessarily ignoble tradition of violent cartoon dogs, more often than not as the dim-witted foil of a feline adversary or as the snickering sidekick to a mustachioed villain. There's a pathos and an inherent sadness to these cartoon canines; that split-second of dawning realisation on their faces before they are dynamited, dropped off cliffs or smashed with anvils for the umpteenth time in their violent and immortal careers seems to contain the ACME of regret. Anyone who has ever watched Warner Brother's Roadrunner cartoons must have wished that – just once – poor Wile E. Coyote could clamp his paws about the neck of his avian tormentor and throttle the hateful thing to death.

"DOG" concerns one such canine, a battle scarred relic of an ancient war. As with his comedic forebears, Muttley, Huckleberry and Bulldog, he is slow witted but implacable, stubborn to the point of insanity, vengeful, capable of receiving and inflicting violence – and like them, he inhabits a world that seems arbitrary, incomprehensible and cruel. Like them, he is aware that something is fundamentally wrong with his existence, some dim cherished moment forever out of reach.

The world of "DOG" was always intended to be bleak, hopeless and cruel – paraphrasing Chandler; any laughter the sound of ice-cubes cracking in a glass of blood. Happily, "DOG" did not turn out as hopelessly as I envisaged; midway through the long and lonely process of animation, and in the absence of actual human contact I grew attached to the characters, and shied away from the wicked cruelties I had planned. It is a sad commentary on my character that I did not go far enough; though anyone familiar with the original script knows I not only pulled my punches but removed the bits of broken glass from my gloves.

I knew (or at least, hoped) that I could keep a lot of the isolation and cruelty in the vision – and that the sound would provide the subterranean river of hidden kindness and tentative friendship I had planned, composer Steve Appel (of "King Curly") having demonstrated his uncanny ability to milk kindness from the obsidian I had provided him in the past.

All well and good. The real gamble was that in our initial discussions (in which Mr Appel revealed his abiding distaste for the script and I helpfully kept it exactly as it was) we knew we wanted the voices of the three characters in "DOG" to be not only rock-luminaries, but personal heroes. We knew who we wanted, and we suspected we knew exactly what their answers would be if we approached them.

Miraculously, Don Walker, Dave Graney and Leo Sayer were good enough to lend their talents; and their performances changed the shape of "DOG" again. Their performances were recorded live, not to playback, and after one viewing of the project on a tiny studio-monitor at best. Animation – or particularly solo animation – can become airless and inert, and we knew we wanted to hypodermically inject some of the high-wire danger of live music into the equation; we got that and more besides. These legends provided something I suspect only musicians can furnish; something unselfconscious, direct and solid as a metal desk – a performance without making a big song and dance about it.

A cartoon about a violent dog may seem a silly sort of thing – but at base, "DOG" is as much about the hope of kindness as it is about killing things with a hammer.

Dan Creighton
2008

PS: It may be of interest that the ruined overpasses and burnt out cars of "DOG" are not a homage to *Mad Max* or other excellent post-apocalyptic films; they are as an exact a depiction as I can muster of the scenery I saw when I miserably commuted between Edinburgh and Glasgow in 2004/2005.

Cast and Crew

Don Walker: "*The Dog*"



Don Walker is best known as a member of Cold Chisel, and for writing many of their now classic pub-rock anthems. Chisel formed in 1973/74 in Adelaide, Australia, comprising Jimmy Barnes (lead vocals), Ian Moss (guitar, vocals), Phil Small (bass, vocals), Steve Prestwich (drums, vocals) and Don Walker (piano, organ, keyboards, vocals), they boasted a respected songwriting team, the most proficient being Don Walker, considered to be among Australia's best lyricists.

After the band broke up in 1983/84, Don Walker went on a five-year nomadic binge around the world. The influences from those years emerged on the first album from his new band "Catfish". The album was released in 1988 and entitled "Unlimited Address". The album remains a unique mixture of autobiographical torch ballads, stripper music, dance parodies and Hungarian and Russian cabaret, more a traveling burlesque show than any attempt to make it in mainstream hit-land as it existed in the 80's.

"Sad But True" was released in 1993. It began as a one-off acoustic session with Tex Perkins (front man for The Cruel Sea, one of the few multi-platinum bands in Australia) and Charlie Owen, and developed into a full length album. The "Sad But True" album was one of 1993's most important releases in Australia, and led to three national tours and a live album. The live album was released 1995 and entitled "Monday Morning Coming Down". In 2005, they released "All is Forgiven" which was Shortlisted for the Australian Music Prize.

1994 was the year of Walker's first full release under his own name, "We're All Gunna Die." It was recorded almost live in the studio over a period of 4 days with a band featuring David Blight, Garrett Costigan on pedal-steel guitar and Red Rivers on guitar. The music is a ragged mix of country, impassioned blues and balladry, and features the song "Barrel of Eternity." It would be another 12 years before Walker was to produce another solo recording, the well-received "Cutting Back." As of mid-[2006](#) he was touring Australia with his current backing band, the Suave Fucks.

Walker has worked with many other artists, most notably with song writing credits on Ian Moss's hit album, "Matchbook" and Jimmy Barnes's single "Stone Cold." He has had songs recorded by TOFOG, Jimmy Little, Slim Dusty, Kate Ceberano, Wendy Matthews, Troy Cassar-Daley, Graeme Connors, Jeff Lang, and Adam Brand. He also produced Moss's album "Petrolhead."

He is the brother of the Australian novelist, Brenda Walker.

Leo Sayer: "The Critter"



Leo is an English singer-songwriter now living in Australia whose singing and writing career has spanned four decades.

Leo had a string of highly polished mainstream pop hits in the late '70s. Sayer began his musical career as the leader of the London-based Terraplane Blues Band in the late '60s. He formed Patches with drummer Dave Courtney in 1971; Courtney used to play with British pop star Adam Faith. Faith was beginning a management career in the early '70s, so Courtney brought Patches to his former employer in hopes of securing a contract. Patches failed to impress Faith, yet he liked Sayer and chose to promote him as a solo artist. Sayer began recording some solo material written with David Courtney at Roger Daltrey's studio; the Who's lead singer

liked the Sayer/Courtney originals enough to record a handful himself, including the hit "Giving It All Away." Sayer's debut single, "Why Is Everybody Going Home," failed to make any impact, yet 1973's "The Show Must Go On" hit number one in the U.K.; a cover by Three Dog Night stopped Sayer's version from charting in the U.S. The following year he released his first album, *Silver Bird*.

Silver Bird was followed quickly by *Just a Boy*, which included two more British hit singles, "One Man Band" and "Long Tall Glasses (I Can Dance)"; "Long Tall Glasses" managed to break Sayer into the American Top Ten in early 1975. Sayer's working relationship with Courtney ended during the recording of his third album, *Another Year* (1975). The following year, he released *Endless Flight*, which was co-written with former Supertramp member Frank Furrell; featuring the number one singles "You Make Me Feel like Dancing" and "When I Need You," the record became his biggest hit in both the U.S. and the U.K., selling over a million copies in America. Following *Endless Flight*, Sayer became a fixture in the American Top 40.

In 2000, "You Make Me Feel Like Dancing" was featured in the hit film, *Charlie's Angels*, and was on the accompanying soundtrack album. On 12 February 2006, Leo made a surprise return to number one in the UK Singles Chart, with Meck's remix of "Thunder In My Heart." He has also appeared in the Australian comedy, *Stupid, Stupid Man*.

Continuing his solo career today in 2008 – Leo is still in high demand owing to his explosive charm and a disarming youthfulness that belies his years. When asked to do the vocals for 'The Critter' in *Dog* – he simply said, "Sure, when do you need me?".

Dave Graney: "The Man"

(from myspace.com/davegraney - there's no way we could have said it better!)

Dave Graney is one of Australia's three great, and of the world's seven great songwriters. Certainly as good as any who have ever lived.



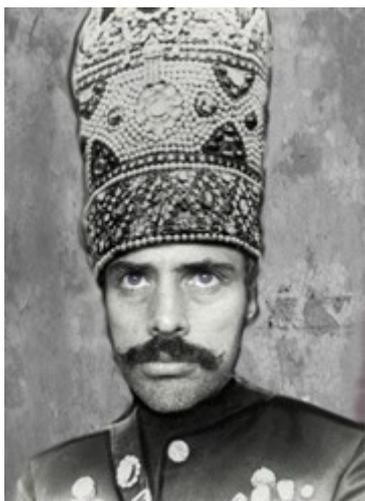
He is also one of the wildest performers. He qualifies as the weirdest and the most regular. As above, so below. Only in the context of rock music do his obdurate regularity/straightness become weird and his weirdness seem straight. Straight rock exotic opposed to the passive denim mob (on stage). He strives for an art or an effect that is opaque. He wants to draw your attention to things he has found to be interesting. He is not dealing in the normal currency of anguished confession and queasy emotion as true and enduring forms. He questions these forms being authentic. To get your attention he has become a master and a fool for sensation and trickery. Sometimes, that's all he likes. They are his forms which he finds to be transitory and thrilling. He likes suspense and suspension, music that doesn't resolve. It hangs in the air. Critics throw stones at him but most often ignore him as he makes

their game redundant. He likes to work big. He tried, in the early 000's, to work small, with the times, wielding a small acoustic guitar and sporting a denim suit (though with a matching slouch hat - a nod to the mad nationalism in the air).

Dave Graney has been playing music since punk rock in the late 70s and found the Nirvanic period to be the last waves of that swell, crashing exhausted onto the shore, bodies everywhere and people like the Screaming Trees blinking hard in the dazzling sunlight of rock festivals rather than dank, tiny rock clubs. They resile from emotive spewing forth. They love authors and people who claim authority as opposed to people who wish to exist completely within defined boundaries of particular genres or forms, people who aspire to disappear within the deathly folds of "folk" or "public domain". The old stories that surround many of their peers from the early 80s, the sad postscript that always laments that such and such were "cruelly ignored" and that their music was too good for the cretinous public does not wash with Graney and Moore. When exposed to the Middle Mass, they have vaulted right into the main square of the village and HAPPENED. They use the vernacular and modes of NOW and always have. Only within rock music, the inert, dead whale, has their argot clashed. They have never spoken rock, they talk to it and about it and sometimes with it but always with that post punk awareness of a bigger dimension that they carry within them and walk around in. Rock Music, provincial village of rich kids and squares. When they came from out of South Australia they had known real tough guys and girls. Here they were supposed to be impressed by these pip-squeaks having a summer down South. They gave them the heebs. Graney grew up in a world of pool halls, bikers and country football. Tough joints. Tough rooms.

Dave Graney; tougher than the rest!

Steve Appel (*King Curly*): Original Score / Sound design



"King Curly" was born of the desire to right wrongs and to punish evil. In that respect, his spiritual forefathers are Robin Hood, Batman, Moses and all of the rest of that head-kicking crew. When I first conceived the character - in the songs "King Curly" and "Curly and Sue" - Evil was enjoying a stronger-than-usual stranglehold on the world and I was working in the public service. King Curly was a drab little man in a drab little job - circumstances curiously similar to my own. But unlike me, King Curly had a dangerous and wonderful secret: on his R.D.O's he was raising an army of outsiders - lepers, failed artists, amputees, frustrated adult film producers and marginalised school bullies to set right the many wrongs of the world.

A decade down the track, and as far as I know, King Curly is yet to chart anywhere. He hasn't been invited (or even nominated) to an awards night either - and I'm reasonably confident he would do badly if he ever competed on 'Australian Idol'. And yet King Curly records have found their way into people's houses all over the big wide world and folks sing along at shows.

Here's a brief précis of the many incarnations of King Curly:

In the beginning Greg J Walker (now of Machine Translations) and I worked together in his little shack by the sea to record the original 'Familyman' series of songs. We were both very sure of our genius and smugly heckled just about everyone from a safe distance. I was also recording some of these early tunes with Brendan Gallagher (Karma County) at his home in Bondi at the time. Elmo Reed and Jon Nix were solid as Incan pyramids throughout this period; multi instrumentalists with music stamped into their DNA. Greg is now rightly feted by the industry as a gun producer, Jon's skills as an animator are much in demand and Mr Reed is currently the world's best guitarist. He also finds time to occasionally pen books about Intelligent Design and lords it over the world as a Doctor of Philosophy.

Two years later the songs that became ['Lullaby'](#) marked my defection from Sydney. They were recorded in a single run at a local school hall near where I now live in the Blue Mountains. 'Lullaby' sounds different to what I had done before because I had played a good deal of live shows and was keen to capture that spontaneity. I'm very proud of "Lullaby", and the distinctive sound we were able to briefly hold. The album featured just myself, Elmo and Ritchie Bray on drums. I can offer no explanation for the weird dreamy feel of that record except that it was a time and a place, I suppose.

Then, in collaboration with my friend and brilliant underground Sydney writer Dan Creighton ["Doomsday Piano"](#) came to be - featuring a boot-camp of academy trained musicians; John Hibbard and the Uncanny Hauptmann Triplets Zoe, Ben & James - all intentionally hobbled by instruments made from fencing wire, driftwood and iron. It's a sinewy taut motherfucker of an album if I don't say so myself.

Which leads us now to the release of ['The Fall & Rise of King Curly 1998-2008'](#). A consolidation project featuring a collection of new and old songs as well as some remixes - all guided by the fickle tastes of the fans who know the music and sent their requests via the web.

Steve Francis: Sound Design



Steve Francis is a composer and music producer who has worked with performers as diverse as Bob Geldof, David Gulpilil and the Australian Ballet. Steve has composed music for such dance productions as *Skin*, *Corroboree*, *Walkabout*, *Bush*, *Boomerang* and *Emeret Lu* (Bangarra Dance Theatre) and *Totem* (Australian Ballet). He has also produced and co-composed music for *Awakenings*, the indigenous section of the Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony as well as *Earth* and for the Rugby World Cup Opening.

Steve has worked on a number of shows for Belvoir St. Including *Capricornia*, *Box The Pony*, *In Our Name*, *Gulpilil*, *Page 8*, *The Spook* and most recently *Parramatta Girls* and *Paul*. His other theatre credits include *Taming of the Shrew*, *Embers*, *7 Stages of Grieving*, *Fat Pig*, *A Hard God*, *Stolen* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (Bell Shakespeare) and *The Suitors*.

For film and TV, Steve has composed for the AFI Award winning short film, *Box*, the documentaries *Macumba* and *Picture the Women*, the Dendy Awards winning films *Black Talk* and *Djarn Djarns*, the Melbourne Film Festival award-winning doco *Mr Patterns* and *Grange*. Most recently Steve collaborated with Alan Ford on the Fox 8 mini-series *Dangerous* and is currently composing music for *Double Trouble* (Nine Network).

Steve personally won the 2003 Helpmann Award for Best Original Score (*Walkabout*) as well as the 2004 Deadly Sound Award.

Dan Creighton: Writer/Director/Animator



Dan Creighton has over ten years experience as an animator, having worked on projects as varied as special effects for sci-fi pilots, video clips, commercials, Flash games, credit sequences and title design...and oddly, he also once produced an interactive game for the BBC featuring cartoon versions of EastEnders characters.

He was the Creative Director of ChaosMusic in the halcyon days of the dot-com bubble, and afterwards he ran away and lived in a tiny village on the Isle of Skye for a year.

Whilst there, he failed to see an otter - despite living next door to a purported otter sanctuary. This bitter disappointment led him to return to civilisation, working as a cartoonist and illustrator in Edinburgh for a time.

He once starred in a no-budget feature, "Dawn", shot in locations all around Sydney, predictably enough, in the hours before dawn as a means of evading location permits - and he still sort of hopes that "Dawn" will be released one day..

In 2006 he co-wrote and co-produced (with Steve Appel) the critically acclaimed (but minimally selling) King Curly album, "Doomsday Piano", as well as creating the animated clip for the single, "I Am Coming Back (In a Revenge Song)". This collaboration proved enjoyable enough for King Curly to provide the original score for "DOG", and Steve Appel and Steve Francis to create the sound-design.

His personal and professional demeanour is modeled on the rumpled private detectives of Chandler and Hammett; he is wont to claim that he, "does everything but divorce work, is reasonably honest and prone to the fits of pique and tantrum throwing that are your guarantee of quality in the artistic world".

Sadly, only one of the latter statements is true.

Chris Murray: Producer



Formerly the Managing Editor for Australian Playboy; Chris launched and edited the internationally respected movie magazine, *Empire*, for Emap Australia which went on to win the prestigious MPA Award for Launch of the Year (2002).

During this period, Chris began his own regular slot on Channel 7's *Sunrise* as their weekly music/film reporter; yet - alas - owing to his rather candid reviewing style, a limited wardrobe, and a complete lack of respect for mainstream Top 40 music - he was 'relieved' of his broadcast duties on more than one occasion...

Chris's other media outlets for film and music reporting/reviewing included weekly segments on Austereo's Triple M network, as well as 5AA in Adelaide. For the past decade, Chris's work has also been published internationally in *Empire*, *FHM*, *Smash Hits*, *Kerrang!*, and just about every music Street Press nationally; as well as a stint editing the Australian Film Institute's 2003 Yearbook.

Chris has since appeared on Showtime, The Movie Network, FOX News USA, 702ABC and assorted broadcast media as a film reviewer and pop culture commentator; and has conducted well over 150 interviews ranging from Jerry Lewis to Marilyn Manson; Lou Reed to Mickey Rourke, Nicole Kidman to The Wiggles... and even some well-known people.

Chris wrote, developed and co-produced the TV series *Erotic Star* seen on Foxtel's Arena channel in March 2007, and aired in the UK in 2006. During this time Chris formed Neon Pictures with producing partner Peter Taylor; and they are currently in development on numerous feature film and TV projects.

Chris is also the creative director for Popcorn Taxi; an unusual entity that unites the audiences with the actors and filmmakers they enjoy watching.

Totally unaware of each other's existence - Chris Murray and Dan Creighton used to compete fiercely over a pool table for many years at the now defunct Century Tavern in Sydney's CBD. A mutual friend united them in 1999... finally resulting in 'DOG' nearly a decade later, amongst many other beer-soaked rambles in the night.

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