

## **Statement of Birds and Animals Unlimited on A Dog's Purpose Videotapes**

Last week a falsely edited video was released to the media. It portrayed a dog being forced to enter a pool against its will and suggested that the dog was traumatized as a result. No such thing occurred, nor would it ever occur under the supervision of our animal trainers.

In one sequence, the videotape shows our animal actor Hercules appearing resistant to being placed in the pool. A voice can be heard saying "Just gotta throw him in." Next, Hercules can be seen in the water, the false implications being that Hercules was actually placed in the water against his will and that the voice that can be heard belongs to someone supervising Hercules.

Here is what actually occurred:

Hercules, a two-year old German Shepherd, had been in training for months to perform the swimming scenes for this film. He was chosen for the film based on his love of the water.

The shot that Hercules performed began with his jumping from the end of the pool into the water as he'd been conditioned to do, then swimming out to a stunt actor and pulling her to safety.

After many successful takes throughout the day, a request was made to have Hercules perform the same behavior, but changing the point from which he was to enter the pool. As the camera started rolling, the trainer in the water began to call the dog. It quickly became apparent that Hercules did not want to enter the pool from this location.

After less than one minute of Hercules insisting on getting back to his original starting point, this plan was abandoned and he was brought to the end of the pool from which he'd been conditioned to enter, and he did so happily.

We cannot identify the voice that appears on the videotape saying “Just gotta throw him in,” but there were many people on the film set and it was not anyone with any authority over Hercules’ welfare as some of the news coverage implied.

In the next shot, Hercules entered the pool from his rehearsed location. While swimming across the pool, the current carried him closer to the wall at end of the pool than it had in previous takes. When the dog reached the wall, he was briefly submerged at which point the diver and trainer immediately pushed him to the surface. Trainers poolside then pulled him out of the water. Hercules shook the water off and wagged his tail.

During the filming, an American Humane Representative was present at all times, approving and documenting every shot. Whenever Hercules was in the water there were two trainers poolside, one trainer in the water, a safety diver, as well as stunt personnel.

The day before the scene was filmed, Hercules and his trainers did a comprehensive rehearsal at the pool location with safety and stunt teams to make certain that safety measures were in place to insure that the dog was not put in any danger.

These safety measures that were put in place worked flawlessly to ensure that no harm came to the dog (or the people) who were in the water during filming that day.

Birds and Animals Unlimited is currently reviewing available footage of these scenes and is evaluating its legal options. In the meantime, we strongly encourage the news media that receive such disturbing, defamatory and maliciously edited videotapes to exercise caution in their broadcast and characterization.