

Jacqueline Piñol:

The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast. My name is Jacqueline Pinol. I am an actor, documentary filmmaker, and animal rescue advocate. The Canine Condition Podcast is a platform to bring awareness to dog adoption and to provide all dog lovers and pet owners with information and resources on how to raise a healthy and well-balanced dog. If you are thinking about getting your first dog or just want to know where and how you can help a dog in need, this is also a place for you.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Do you ever set out to accomplish one small goal, and once you've achieved it, you relish the moment, but accomplishing the goal has actually lit up a curiosity in you, a voice that says, "What if I can do more? Maybe this time I'll make the goal a little bigger." Who doesn't love a good challenge, especially if you feel you can do it. When I first adopted my dog, Dublin, whom you'll hear a lot about throughout this podcast series, I did not want her to be euthanized at the shelter. My goal was to find her a forever home while I fostered her.

Of course, that home ended up being me. But when we did get her from the shelter, there were 50 plus other dogs I walked by and looked at in those kennels that I could not adopt. That doesn't mean somebody didn't save them, but the thought that those lives would go on behind bars until who knows when was extremely troubling to me. That was when my curiosity lit up. How can I help more homeless dogs, even if it's just a little bit? Is a little bit enough? The journey has been long, and there have been a lot of ups and downs as with all goals that we set.

But I'll tell you what made me keep going despite the many obstacles, meeting like-minded people who are also just as busy, who have full lives, with careers and family, but share that common goal with you. That is incentive to keep going. When I saved Dublin, I was very new to knowing and understanding how big the problem of dog homelessness is not just in my City of Los Angeles, but in my state of California and in this whole country.

And the more I talked about my goal or shared stories, the more I met people that also took time out of their lives to help curb this problem of dog overpopulation and homelessness. I realized I don't have to solve this problem by myself. I actually can't. People need people. In all areas of life, no matter what we are after, we need each other. Just like our dogs need us, we need us. Heck, there was a whole movement outside of my bubble that was already making great strides in saving homeless dogs and many other species at that.

One of those wonderful inspiring people that I met is on the podcast today. She is a model citizen. It is my pleasure to have Katie Cleary on this podcast episode. Katie Cleary is a filmmaker, producer, and philanthropist. She has an expansive career in modeling and in the entertainment industry worldwide. She uses her platform for the greater good of animals and mankind, because it is an important mission to her.

Katie is the founder and creator of World Animal News, which covers the latest breaking animal, environmental, and plant-based news from around the world. She is also the president and founder of the animal welfare organization Peace 4 Animals. She produced and wrote the award-winning documentary Give Me Shelter that premiered on Netflix in 2015. And she just finished her second documentary titled Why On Earth, which follows the work of the leaders at the forefront of the animal welfare movement. Welcome to The Canine Condition Podcast, Katie.

Katie Cleary:

Thank you for having me.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Absolutely. So although this podcast is about The Canine Condition, your experience of saving animals extends far beyond that with your organization, Peace 4 Animals. When did you decide to launch the foundation and why?

Katie Cleary:

Well, I launched it in 2012, and it was actually an epiphany that I had along with my news network, World Animal News, and my first documentary, Give Me Shelter. And I woke up one morning and I felt I'm just not doing enough to really focus on my mission for animals. I grew up in entertainment. I started when I was a young girl, around 11, 12. I started modeling and acting in Chicago, but my passion was really about animal welfare.

And so I thought at this moment in 2012, when I woke up, I thought, I think I have to start my own organization and start this news network that I was dreaming about for years. And the name popped into my head, Peace 4 Animals and World Animal News. And so that's really how it all started. I felt like I had done everything I could in entertainment as far as the campaigns and the modeling and the commercials and TV and film and all of that. And I thought this is definitely the next chapter and the next step in my life to really focus on my mission and passion, which is for the animals.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And I did read on your website, your organization has raised tens of thousands of dollars for many animal organizations around the globe in support of the protection of endangered species. Peace 4 Animals also helps rescue, rehabilitate, and find homes for domestic animals. Can you tell me how you choose to get involved with an organization, or is it based on a case-by-case basis on an animal or somebody reaches out to you?

Katie Cleary:

Yeah. There's multiple ways. Really growing up in this business, I have a lot of like-minded people that I've met. It's a large community, but it's also small, so you really know who's doing the good work who needs help. We do a lot of work in Africa, Indonesia as well with orangutans. It's just interesting. It's kind of a case by case basis, but we've helped organizations rescue elephants and rhinos that are in need, victims of the ivory and rhino horn trade.

We've helped Akashinga, the all female anti-poaching team in Zimbabwe, who's headed by Damien Mander, the head of International Anti-Poaching, and then we've also helped to rescue farm animals, pigs and chickens, cows from slaughter. We've helped with undercover investigations.

Jacqueline Piñol:

You cover it all.

Katie Cleary:

We cover it all. Exactly.

Jacqueline Piñol:

You have cats, right? You have the cats with you?

Katie Cleary:

I've got nine cats and three dogs.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh my gosh.

Katie Cleary:

Yes. It's a mini rescue.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I think I hear the cats. Is that them tapping and playing around?

Katie Cleary:

They are. Yes, they are all around.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I can hear it.

Katie Cleary:

Yes. They play with the chords. You name it. They just try to get my attention at any moment they can.

Jacqueline Piñol:

They're going to be part of the interview. They're like, "You think we're going to be silent? I don't think so."

Katie Cleary:

I love their personalities. They're great.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And how did you get your dogs?

Katie Cleary:

Charlie is my first dog. Actually, I found him at the Pasadena shelter and I think five times I went to go look at every shelter and I kept going back to this one shelter. Something about this dog. I just remember him looking at me from the back of the cage. Really slowly put his head down and he just let his head go into my hand like, "Get me out of here."

Jacqueline Piñol:

What kind of dog is he and how old is he now?

Katie Cleary:

He is about I would say 12, and he's an Australian Shepherd mix. He's just hysterical. He cracks me up. I mean, he's so connected to me. He's so protective. He's my love. And then Wolfie I found in a parking lot at a high kill shelter. We were filming my first documentary, Give Me Shelter, and I went out to my car and someone was bringing him in. He was nine months old at the time. And I said, "What are you doing with the Husky?"

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, I've seen him.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah. Yeah. And I said, "What are you doing with the Husky?" And they said, "Oh, we can't take care of him anymore." And they said, "Yeah, we're dropping him off at the shelter." I'm like, "No. No, you're not." I said, "I'll take him." They actually just gave me his papers. They had sadly bought him from a breeder. To me, it's just crazy. A lot of people do that. They buy them from a pet store, or they buy them from a breeder and then they drop them off at a shelter and then God knows what happens to them.

I really encourage people to go to the shelters and adopt, don't shop.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And I know that it's hard for people because they don't want to see everything like all the dogs they can't take home, but it's not like the breeders are taking them back or saying, "Oh, don't worry. We'll take it back. Here's your money and we'll rehome it." That's not happening.

Katie Cleary:

Exactly. I know. I know. It's heartbreaking.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Absolutely.

Katie Cleary:

But it's interesting, my third dog, Lucky, he's a little doxy mix. I was on my way to an audition. And he was found in the middle of the road. He got hit by a car. Picked him up, took him to the nearest veterinarian and paid for his surgery. And they were just like, "Is this your dog?" I said, "No, I just found him." And they're like, "You're paying for a surgery?" And I said, "Yeah, of course." I used the money for my last Deal or No Deal check to pay for his surgery, and it was the last check I remember. And it was like I think that check was \$1,500. And I said, "You know what? That's a sign because that's exactly how much the surgery was."

Jacqueline Piñol:

That's crazy. That's a sign.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah, it was definitely a sign. I've rescued quite a few animals. Find a lot of homes for a lot of animals. That was right when I first started Peace 4 Animal and now my focus is definitely... We actually aide a foundation called Animal Rescue Mission. They do that full time, so they're our official rescue partner.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh great.

Katie Cleary:

Kind of gone more into the legislation, the documentary filmmaking, the news, and the endangered species.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I love that, because we want to just let our listeners know, if dogs aren't your thing but you happen to be listening to this podcast, but you have an affinity for cats or you want to make a difference in the life of endangered species, there is a place, and this is the episode where you're going to get all that information. Katie, I want to let our listeners know how I met you. Johnny and I were at a fundraising dinner for a nonprofit dog rescue organization named Wings of Rescue, and Katie was at the same event. This was in 2015. I had by chance recently watched the documentary Give Me Shelter. And we saw Katie, so we walked up to her. We wanted to congratulate her for making this remarkable film with such an important message. And I have to say, when I walked up to you, Katie, you were so approachable, so warm and grounded. I even briefly shared with you that I was on my own mission to make a documentary series based on dog rescue, and you encouraged me. You said that if I need anything to please stay in touch and reach out. And that just really moved me and encouraged me to stay on that mission because it's not an easy one.

Katie Cleary:

No, it's not, but it's a blessing. And we meet people that have similar missions to us, and I believe everything really does happen for a reason.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Absolutely. And let's talk about that film, Give Me Shelter. For anyone who hasn't seen it, it is available. You can rent it online. It's so easy to find.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah. Give Me Shelter was on Netflix. It premiered in 2015. It is no longer on Netflix, but you can get it on our website, give-me-shelter.com, and I believe it's still on iTunes, Amazon, Barnes and Noble. You can get it all the digital platforms. It's still on.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Great. I really encourage our listeners to check out the film. It's done in very good taste with people who speak from the heart, who are making a huge difference in the lives of many endangered species and our domesticated animals as well. Just in the first minute of the trailer, as a matter of fact, you do bring up a brutal reality of what happens to homeless dogs when not adopted and where puppies that are in pet

stores come from. How did you decide to address that and then extend to the endangered species? How hard was it to connect everything for you?

Katie Cleary:

It was a little difficult to connect the dots because I wanted to cover so many issues, and that's the one thing in the first documentary. People thought, "Wow! Well, how are you going to make this into a story?" So I thought let's start with what people know best, their own pets and the brutal reality of where they get their pets, pet store, from breeders, and really encourage people to adopt, not shop. I thought that was kind of an easy segue into now horses, and then we go into the fur trade, and we go into cosmetic animal testing.

I really wanted to cover the top issues that were really important in that time period when we started filming, 2012-2013, and they're still very important. But actually there have been tremendous improvements. The puppy mill issues have gotten better. We've tightened legislation. We've passed bills in California, Chicago, all these other States. So as a result, I think that we were a little bit ahead of the game when we were filming that back in 2012. The issues are still relevant, but there's been tremendous headway.

Jacqueline Piñol:

You've seen the progress, right? You feel like, "Hey, we're getting somewhere."

Katie Cleary:

Oh, absolutely. 100%. And I think that's so empowering because we helped to pass a couple of those important bills recently actually. One was in 2017.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes. Tell us about that.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah, the Pet Rescue and Adoption Act. That was just crucial. It was AB-485. It was sponsored by assembly members Patrick O'Donnell and Matt Dababneh and our partner, Social Compassion in Legislation, spearheaded that and I'm on their board. Peace 4 Animals also helped back that as well. It's just critical to get at stores to stop selling animals and stop getting them from these puppy mills and backyard breeders and adopting animals out instead. It has changed the game for not only rescues, but shelters because the shelters are so overpopulated.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Exactly. I have shared with listeners in previous episodes how I myself was a victim to not knowing where to get a dog. My first dog was from a breeder. My second dog was from a pet store. Listen, I come clean because those were my experiences that I could not change. That was back in 2002 and 2006.

It's really important that people know that even if you've done it before or you feel like, "Oh, I don't want to tell anyone I got a dog from a breeder, or I wouldn't want to say I bought it from a pet store," but if now you know that you can change or that you can help others by doing things differently, the door is always open because we need more people to jump on board this mission.

Katie Cleary:

Absolutely, we need much more people, much more voices. It shows someone's character as having a mission in this world greater than themselves.

Jacqueline Piñol:

That is a very beautiful statement, especially because in these trying times, we need each other.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah.

Jacqueline Piñol:

The least we could do is reach out to each other and find ways to connect and animals bring us together. And I wanted to ask you, how easy is it for people to get involved with legislation?

Katie Cleary:

If it's an issue that you're very passionate about, you can start a petition. If it's a big enough issue and you have enough people behind you and you make a big enough stink about it, the legislators are going to take notice.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I was very aware of you helping pass the California Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act, which I want you to talk to us a little bit about.

Katie Cleary:

The Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act was also spearheaded by Social Compassion in Legislation, our partner, and then there was quite a few other organizations involved as well.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And tell us what happened when it was passed and what means for animals and cosmetics today in California?

Katie Cleary:

Well, it was a fight, I'll tell you. It passed in 2018 and we had to fight all the big cosmetic companies. We're talking in L'Oreal, Estee Lauder, Johnson & Johnson, all the big ones, because we're the fifth largest economy. These companies are not going to formulate their product just for California. That means that we had to kind of force their hand and they have to reformulate everything for all the States. So that's why they were fighting us so hard, and they brought out the big guns. They brought out the big lobbyists.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Of course.

Katie Cleary:

The one thing that we had behind us was no actress or model is going to back them knowing that all these animals are going to be killed. An estimated 500,000 animals are killed just for cosmetic animal

testing every year. I don't want to mention specific names, but a couple of the big brands that I'm sure we've all have used in the past have sold out to China. One of the biggest caveats in this issue was that one big company, Paul Mitchell, John Paul DeJoria, a co-founder Paul Mitchell, China wanted to buy their products, but he refused to test on animals.

So he actually negotiated a contract with China and said, "Well, you're going to take our product, but we're not going to test on animals. We'll give you a human skin cell test. And if you guys can accept that, then we'll sell it to you, but we're not going to test on animals."

Jacqueline Piñol:

Wow, good for him.

Katie Cleary:

But all the other companies, I don't believe that they knew about that. So sadly, some of them sold out to China. And one of the prerequisites to selling in China was if you didn't want to test on animals, then you would have to build a facility there and then hire Chinese workers to work at the facility.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Because they can test on animals.

Katie Cleary:

Yeah, exactly. So then when we came with Paul Mitchell, they negotiated. That was a game changer, because now all the other companies looked really stupid.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Right. And you see that there is a solution that doesn't have to sacrifice all these animals. And some of them are dogs, right? I want people to understand when we are all up in arms, those of us that are active in the rescue movement, it's because innocent beings are being put through horrible testing just so we can put on some pretty makeup.

Katie Cleary:

It's terrible. It doesn't make sense to pour mascara and a bunny's eye and blind them because of what? I mean, haven't we tested on enough animals? And isn't there a better technology out there? We should know what's safe and what's not by now.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yeah, you would think.

Katie Cleary:

The Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act was one of the hardest. I felt like I was in high school, being in those halls at the Capitol. It was shocking to see the childish nature of some of these big corporations and what they would do to sell their soul to the devil.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Wow.

Katie Cleary:

I was appalled. I said, "I cannot believe." Here we are, we're just trying to be a voice for these animals and save lives, and they're spending all this money trying to fight us for what?

Jacqueline Piñol:

For what?

Katie Cleary:

For what? So they don't have to reformulate something that eventually it's going to have to happen anyways. We just made it happen sooner.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Those are some big pluses. That's making progress and that's the exciting part of sharing with our listeners that speaking up and standing behind movements that have a bigger platform, we don't have to take the platform on ourselves, but there is somewhere we can go and support and say, "Hey, you have my vote."

Katie Cleary:

Yeah. And start contacting companies and say, "Hey look, would you get behind this bill?" And if you have enough companies and enough letters, the legislators are going to listen.

Jacqueline Piñol:

See, and people, I think, feel maybe that their efforts fall on deaf ears, but not so much because this is how everything starts to change, right?

Katie Cleary:

Yeah.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And I just want to reiterate for listeners who want to look this up, it is the California Cruelty-Free Cosmetics Act, SB-1249, and then there's the Pet Rescue and Adoption Act, AB-485, which is requiring dogs, cats, and rabbits sold in California pet stores to be rescued from animal shelters or rescue groups. Those are two very important bills.

Katie Cleary:

Yes.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Yes.

Katie Cleary:

Very important. They were back to back, 2017, 2018. Those were two great years.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Very. Congratulations, Katie, because really I do see a lot of awareness. Sometimes I'll mention World Animal News and somebody knows about it already.

Katie Cleary:

Oh wow!

Jacqueline Piñol:

I was like, "Oh cool." Yeah, that's happened to me several times. I actually saw a video today, and I wanted to mention that sometimes if people are not necessarily interested or involved with animals, but like you said, there's other avenues. It could be senior citizens, children, veterans, the homeless. If there is a cause out there that speaks to you, we live in a world where your voice and your action is needed and reach out. There is somebody out there wanting your help, wanting you to volunteer.

And just today I saw this video on World Animal News with the seals and the plastic, right? At first, you think it's all these beautiful seals running into the ocean. And then you see this guy chasing this one seal because it had some plastic wrapped around it. And it just made me stop to think like, we need to be more conscious of what we put in the trash, what we consume, what we buy. It's so all encompassing.

Katie Cleary:

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Whatever your passion, your mission may be, just pick something that really lights a fire.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Can you tell us a little bit about Why On Earth, your next documentary?

Katie Cleary:

Yes. We haven't released the trailer yet, just because right now we're chopping it around. We literally just finished it. It took a year of editing, a year of writing. And in between all of that, we were filming. So three years total.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And you were right there in the trenches, right, Katie?

Katie Cleary:

Yeah. I was in Africa, Indonesia. It started in South Africa, Kenya, then we went to Borneo. We went to Sumatra, Indonesia. Then we went to Mexico. We came back to the Capitol to film legislative footage. So basically showing what's happening on the ground in all these countries and then bringing it back to the States and showing how you really affect change on a federal and a state level.

Jacqueline Piñol:

This is your directorial debut. Yes?

Katie Cleary:

Yes. Yes. The first film I wrote and produced and executive produced, my best friend directed, but this time I'm directing, producing, and executive producing, and she's writing and doing post-production.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I know you can't do any spoilers, but just a teaser of what we could expect or what we could be looking forward to.

Katie Cleary:

Well, it opens with Clint Eastwood.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Wow.

Katie Cleary:

So it's basically a followup to Give Me Shelter, but it's on the ground. We are in the trenches. We are rescuing animals. We're interviewing the people that are really making a difference. I mean, we're talking about the two conservationists that are boots on the ground, saving rhinos, protecting farm animals, spreading the plant-based movement. We have Leilani Munter, who's vegan race car driver. We've got Maggie Q. We've got John Sally at the Capitol helping us pass legislation.

I mean, it takes you on a journey through the lives of all of these individuals who are fighting for different species, but it all really comes down to all of us.

Jacqueline Piñol:

It does. I love the title, by the way.

Katie Cleary:

Thank you.

Jacqueline Piñol:

It says so much without saying too much. I'm so looking forward to it. We will definitely be posting about it once we see you posting the release dates and the trailer.

Katie Cleary:

Yes.

Jacqueline Piñol:

I just want to let our listeners know that I am not getting paid to advocate for any organization on this podcast. I choose organizations that I know are doing the good work for dogs and people across America. And in this case, across the world. Peace 4 Animals and World Animal News have the Canine Condition seal of approval from me. Katie, thank you so much. Tell us where we can send listeners to find your organizations and follow you on social media.

Katie Cleary:

Sure, sure. Yes, that's so sweet of you, by the way. That really means a lot to me. Yes, you can visit worldanimalnews.com. We do breaking news, so you can find that on @worldanimalnews_ on Instagram and also @peace_4animals, so at P-E-A-C-E underscore four and then animals, on Instagram as well. And then you can follow Why On Earth Film and watch Give Me Shelter.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Perfect. And for the show notes for this episode, we will have all those links. If you scroll to the bottom of the episode on your podcast platform, you will find them all there and be able to stay in touch and informed with the latest news on Peace 4 Animals, and that's peace the number four animals, and with World Animal News.

Katie Cleary:

Awesome. Thank you so much for having me on.

Jacqueline Piñol:

Oh, Katie, thank you for being my guest today. Your mission to make the planet a better place for us all is one that we must all get behind. I wish you the best of luck with your projects in the future, and thank you so much for being a guest on The Canine Condition Podcast.

Katie Cleary:

Thank you and God bless.

Jacqueline Piñol:

And I'd like to leave you, our listeners, with a quote from Katie. "We are the voices for the voiceless, creating awareness and making change to help protect the magnificent creatures we share this planet with." Until next time, hang onto those leashes. The Canine Condition. Come. Sit. Stay.