

# Dirty Creature

New Zealand : 1995 : dir. Grant Campbell : WingNut / Top Shelf : c15 min  
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:  
[Kylie Kerrison](#) .....  
 Adult cast unknown

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Radio Times – very misleading – note:

“A short comic thriller from New Zealand about a woman and her unruly dog, who are kidnapped by an unpleasant old man.”

[no listing in "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001" or "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995"]

The “woman” is approximately ten years old, she and her dog are not kidnapped, and the old man is not unpleasant. In all other respects the *Radio Times* precis is right on the button. As so often with these short films that Channel 4 like to broadcast in the wee hours, the casual viewer is left wondering what the point of it all was, beyond being a technical exercise in camera setups, sound recording, editing etc. Many of them simply look like music videos without the music – glossy, fast-paced and vacuous.

The story – a mud-bedraggled small girl and her dog (which is mortified by one of those veterinary head-mufflers that resemble a flower pot rammed over the ears) wander into a strange and exotic private garden, where the girl is intrigued by a small stone figurine of Pan. This she proceeds to steal, but is caught in the act by the owner, an elderly gardener. Instead of (very properly) giving her a good hiding on the spot, he locks her up in his toolshed, and retires into the kitchen to sharpen his knives. Meanwhile the girl attempts to escape through a skylight in the shed, but finds it padlocked. She sets about trashing the toolshed.

The old man emerges from his kitchen with sharpened knife, but he only means to use it on his garden. He calls gently to the girl in the shed, saying he'll let her out directly she apologises for trespassing. No reply is made, so he opens the shed to reassure her he'll do her no harm. There is a quivering heap on the floor in one corner, but what emerges when he disturbs it is not a small girl, but an alligator. The alligator gnaws his shin off, then pursues him into his kitchen. Well, he wasn't expecting **that**, I think we can agree.

Finally we see the still-muddy young girl and her dog proceeding on their way down a suburban avenue. She is nursing the stolen Pan statuette. An ice cream van passes by, and she discards the blood-soaked Pan in a gutter as she skips happily after the van. End titles.

The moral? Don't take any chances with small girls you catch thieving in your garden, I guess. Good colour photography, poor animation work on the monster. It's not a “comic thriller” either, but full marks for the unexpected. Nothing else is known of ms Kylie Kerrison, very possibly the cinema's first and only female were-alligator.

See subject index under **ANIMALS, AUSTRALASIA, DOGS, FANTASY** and **SHORT FILMS**.