



Born on Death Row

The Hidden World of Toxicology Testing

One of the most controversial and hidden aspects of animal testing: the industrial-scale breeding of beagle puppies for use in contract toxicology testing is exposed in this investigative documentary.

Abstract

* *It has been almost 30 years since the last UK documentary on the subject*

The Hidden Reality

Behind closed doors, thousands of beagles are bred for toxicology testing, their fate sealed from birth. Chosen for their docility, they spend their first 20 weeks in barren sheds before being sold into labs, where they endure months of relentless chemical dosing.

But their suffering is hidden by government secrecy, with FOI exemptions shielding toxicology labs from public scrutiny. Through exclusive undercover footage, activist investigations, and expert analysis, *Born on Death Row* exposes a flawed system that profits from hidden suffering.

Failure of Science

A notorious 90–95% failure rate as stated by the British Medical Journal (BMJ), the U.S. FDA, and Yale School of Medicine.

Could this be a convenient smokescreen behind which corporations can manipulate results while outdated secrecy laws shield the industry from scrutiny?

This film investigates who benefits from this deception, how secrecy sustains it, and what it will take to end it.

A Future Without Animal Testing

From parliamentary debates and open rescues to cutting-edge, animal-free science, *Born on Death Row* follows those challenging secrecy, exposing corruption, and demanding change.

This is more than a film—it is an exposé, a rallying cry, and a vision of a future where no animal is born to suffer in the name of science.

A notorious 90–95% failure rate as stated by the British Medical Journal (BMJ), the U.S. FDA, and Yale School of Medicine.



Dosing directly into the stomach

Cb = pH[H ⁺]	[OH ⁻]
7.403.98E-08	2.51E-07
7.602.51E-08	3.98E-07
8.001.00E-08	1.00E-06
8.403.98E-09	2.51E-06
8.801.58E-09	6.31E-06
9.001.00E-09	1.00E-05
9.403.98E-10	2.51E-05
9.801.58E-10	6.31E-05



Toxicology testing client

Synopsis

Following dedicated people's campaigns and their remarkable achievements including capturing exclusive footage, press coverage, two parliamentary debates from successful government petitions and their social media presence drawing urgent attention to an industry of suffering, shrouded in secrecy.

As it follows this path, intriguing anomalies emerge in the regulatory framework such as exemptions from animal welfare regulations, and from freedom of information requests.

Additionally, the conflicting secrecy clause within the Animal (Scientific) Procedures Act, which effectively conceals the very practices the Act is supposed to regulate and monitor for ethical compliance.

If these practices were truly legitimate, they would withstand public scrutiny without shrouding themselves in secrecy. By their very existence, these clauses confirm that something is fundamentally broken—and must be confronted.

As society moves towards a consensus that animal testing is both scientifically invalid and ethically indefensible, the film explores the evidence supporting this view, and also shows how cutting-edge, animal-free methods now offer a viable way for these outdated practices to be left behind.

So, what are the obstacles holding back the transition?



Parliamentary debate on Animal Testing



Industrial breeding facility

Introduction

A hidden camera in an English hedgerow captures a steel cage full of over excited beagle puppies being wheeled across the loading bay of a high security breeding facility. It is likely to be the first and only time they see the sky before being stacked into unmarked vans for transport to laboratories around the country.

First Ever Covert Footage

Amidst a 24/7 protest camp outside the facility, activists, driven to probe deeper, make inventive use of an 8-metre fishing pole with a spy camera on the end.

Under the cover of trees and an overhead look-out drone, the pole is fed through the fence, across a driveway and into the air vents of a breeding shed, revealing, for the first time in decades, the heartbreaking scenes of deprivation inside. A factory of innocent puppies, unaware of what lies ahead for them.



Open Rescue

This inspires the execution of a bold and open rescue of 5 beagles from the facility, with the group filming themselves in the process. Speaking directly to camera, these activists explain their motive: to bring animal testing to trial.

Despite handing themselves in to the police, charges of burglary are suddenly dropped without reason, hinting at a deeper layer of corporate and governmental secrecy.

Still determined for a trial, the group return for a further rescue, this time of 18 beagles, for which they are currently awaiting trial. This documentary will follow this ongoing storyline throughout production.

From this introductions, Born on Death Row explores the whole subject, seeking to shatter this shield of government backed secrecy, upheld by FOI exemption, which has shrouded the practice for decades as it asks: What exactly is it that we are not allowed to know?

Filmmaker Profiles

Fiaz and Jacqui Ahmed have spent over 30 years living and working together, blending expertise from IT, design, and hospitality. Ten years ago, they founded a thriving vegan retreat and animal sanctuary, reflecting a real commitment to compassion and advocacy for animals.

When Camp Beagle emerged in 2021, both quickly became core members of the team, contributing to obtaining covert footage, video editing of an eight minute film presenting the footage, including several custom edits for The Independent newspaper. They also worked on two successful government petitions including coding an 'automatic MP emailer' on the website for supporters, organising national outreach, print design, and managing social media and collaborative platforms in support of the campaign.

Immersed at the campaign's forefront, Fiaz and Jacqui now bring their diverse skillset, knowledge of the issue, contacts, and advocacy experience to lead the production of Born on Death Row, taking it in their own hands to bring this long overdue film that shines a spotlight on this dark and hidden practice, with an urgent call to action.



Project Lead



Fiaz Ahmed
Co-Director and Producer



Jacqui Ahmed
Co-Director and Producer

Treatment

From the emotional opening, the film transitions to the broader story, structured around the following core elements:

The Hidden Lives of Beagles

Reveals the industrial-scale breeding of beagles, selected for their docile nature and kept under strict “pathogen-free” confinement. Researchers detail the grim realities at sites like Marshall Bioresources, and FOI requests lead to the accidental release of a project license for the site, later to become known as the 'bleeding license', which details the disturbing practice of terminal bleeding. The harvesting of puppy blood for sale by fatal cardiac puncture.

Inside the Testing Labs

The documentary plans to capture additional undercover footage from breeding facilities and laboratories during the production process. Should obtaining this material prove challenging, the narrative will be supplemented with the latest existing verified footage and testimony to ensure the story is conveyed powerfully.

Explores the regimen of repeated chemical dosing lasting up to 90 consecutive days, despite severe and compounding symptoms. Disturbing first hand accounts of dogs recoiling and shaking their heads at the very first sign of the next dose approaching. Studying the 21 different

'anatomical dose routes' promoted to clients on the website of Labcorp, Europe's largest contract testing laboratory.

Ethics and Morals

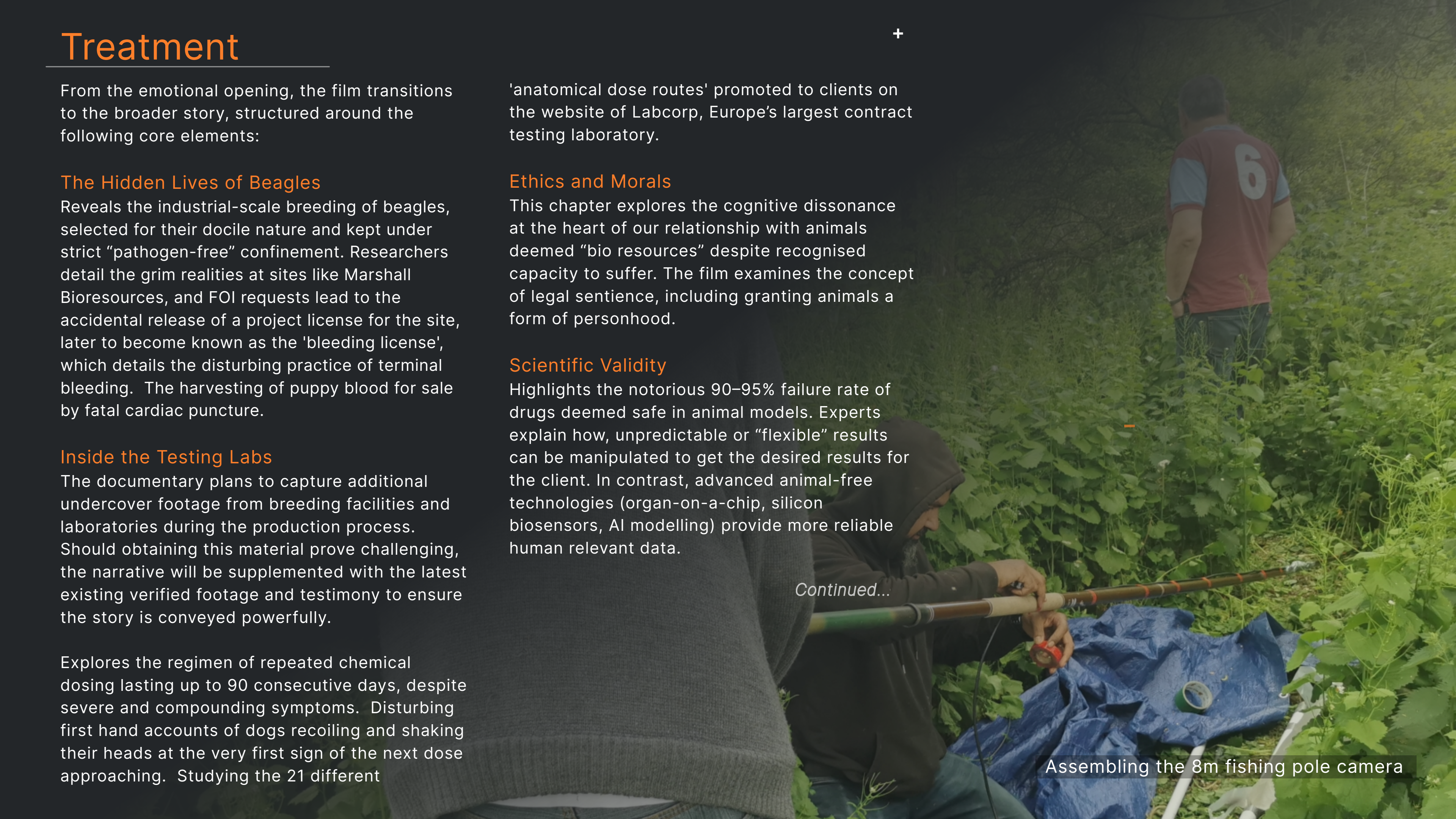
This chapter explores the cognitive dissonance at the heart of our relationship with animals deemed “bio resources” despite recognised capacity to suffer. The film examines the concept of legal sentience, including granting animals a form of personhood.

Scientific Validity

Highlights the notorious 90–95% failure rate of drugs deemed safe in animal models. Experts explain how, unpredictable or “flexible” results can be manipulated to get the desired results for the client. In contrast, advanced animal-free technologies (organ-on-a-chip, silicon biosensors, AI modelling) provide more reliable human relevant data.

Continued...

Assembling the 8m fishing pole camera



Treatment ...ctd

Government Secrecy, Corporate Influence

Beneath FOI exemptions, major pharmaceutical and chemical corporations leverage lobbying power and financial incentives to perpetuate animal-based testing. By funding campaigns and forging close regulatory relationships, they maintain outdated testing pipelines, despite high failure rates, impeding adoption of advanced, cruelty-free methods and overshadowing ethical objections.

Disparity in Standards

Local authorities in the United States recently forced the closure of Envigo's beagle breeding site after welfare violations, while in Italy, Marshall Bioresources' Green Hill facility was shut down following breaches of local standards leading to imprisonment of management. Despite Britain's reputation for robust animal welfare, its animals in science remain exempt from those same protections.

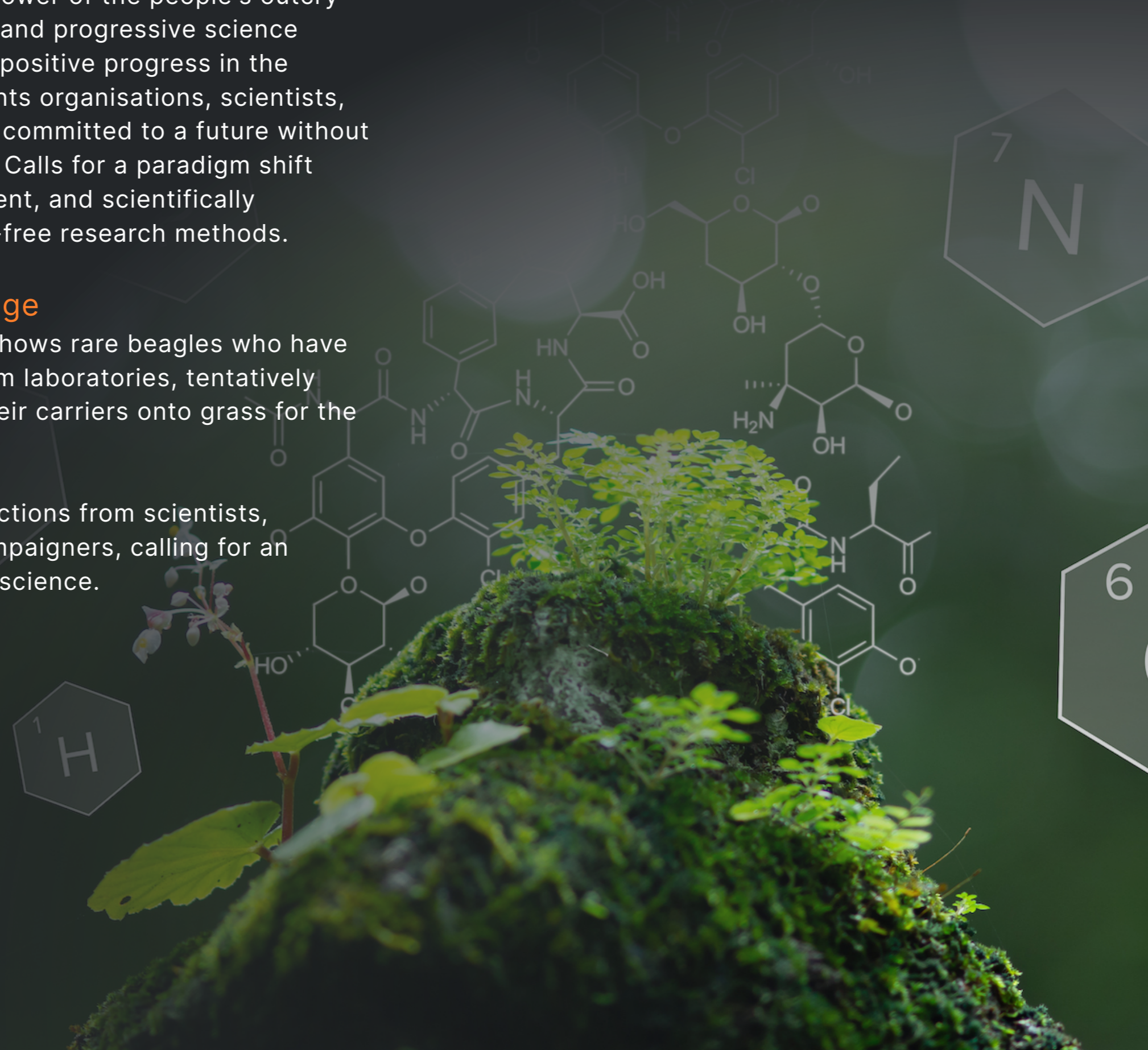
A Better Future & Hope for Advocacy

Emphasises the power of the people's outcry against injustice, and progressive science including current positive progress in the industry. Spotlights organisations, scientists, and campaigners committed to a future without animal suffering. Calls for a paradigm shift towards transparent, and scientifically advanced animal-free research methods.

Closing Montage

A final montage shows rare beagles who have been rescued from laboratories, tentatively emerging from their carriers onto grass for the very first time.

Overlaid are reflections from scientists, ethicists, and campaigners, calling for an ethically evolved science.



Structure & Format

The film is divided into chapters as outlined in the Treatment, each section blending emotive storytelling with investigative depth. The overarching format balances personal narratives, expert analysis, and global case studies.

By exploring the emotional impact on both animals and humans, and by systematically dissecting the flaws of animal-based research, the documentary maintains a cohesive and powerful narrative flow.

General Film Techniques

The following core techniques will be used throughout the film to create both emotional impact and factual clarity.

Archival and Mobile Phone Footage.

Real-world rescues, protests, and behind-the-scenes views of breeding facilities.

Handling Graphic Content

We will not show graphic content directly; instead, we will capture the emotional reactions of those witnessing it and feature them describing what they see—an approach that may evoke an even stronger response while also ensuring the film remains suitable for wider distribution.

Interviews

Conversations with whistleblowers, scientists, ex-animal researchers, ethicists, former lab technicians, political and legal experts, owners of ex-laboratory beagles and the general public.

Reenactments

Dramatised renditions of critical events.

Investigative Journalism

Including research documents, hidden-camera footage (acquired ethically), and policy analysis.

Infographics and Animations

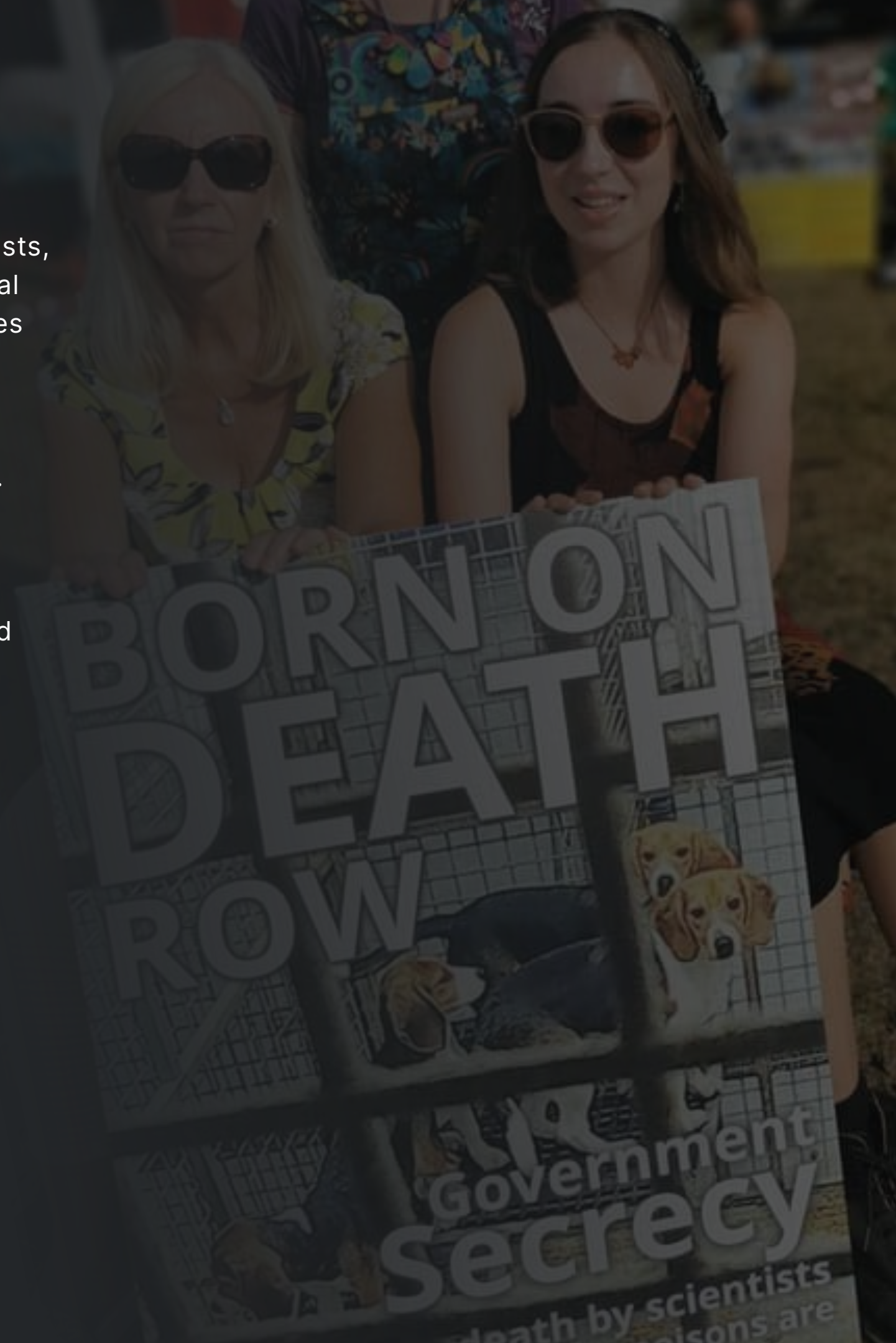
Explaining complex processes, from toxicology testing to novel scientific methods.

On-Location Filming

Breeding and testing facilities worldwide, highlighting scale and global coverage.

Montages, Emotive Sequences

Showcasing personal stories of both rescued animals and the people fighting for them.



Production Plan

Phase 1: Pre-Production

1. Research and Story Development

Deep investigation into breeding practices, toxicology protocols, and animal-free methods. Identify key interviews and potential whistleblowers or expert contributors. Collaborate with advocacy groups and scientific advisors to ensure accuracy.

2. Scripting and Creative Planning

Develop narrative structure and refine interview questions. Plan any required reenactments. Consider innovative filming techniques (e.g. undercover cameras) where legally viable.

3. Location Scouting and Permits

Secure filming permissions at breeders and labs (if possible), and public or government sites. Conduct thorough logistical assessments for each setting.

4. Legal Approval and Ethical Clearances

Consult with legal counsel to review planned content for compliance with defamation laws, FOI restrictions, and privacy regulations.

Ensure all footage is obtained with necessary permissions; establish protocols for any undercover work.

Address potential liability concerns, including disclaimers and indemnities.

5. Team Assembly

Recruit key crew members (producers, director, camera operators, sound technicians). Engage investigative journalists, legal experts, and animal-welfare consultants for specialised input.

(3-4 months)

Phase 2: Production

1. Filming Primary Content

Conduct interviews, gather on-location footage, and capture any relevant B-roll. Pursue undercover footage ethically and safely, in collaboration with whistleblowers or activists. Explore diverse perspectives, including industry or regulatory voices willing to speak on record.

2. Reenactments and Visuals

Stage courtroom reconstructions or rescue recreations, guided by documented evidence. Film cutaway sequences and detail shots that highlight scientific processes or lab conditions.

(9-12 months)

Phase 3: Post-Production

1. Editing and Assembly

Organise interviews, undercover footage, and reenactments into a cohesive narrative. Create infographics and animations to clarify complex scientific data or legal statutes.

2. Scoring and Sound Design

Compose or source an emotive soundtrack to underscore critical moments. Mix interviews with atmospheric audio, ensuring clarity and impact.

3. Fact-Checking and Review

Consult scientific and legal experts to ensure accuracy and completeness. Host test screenings for feedback, refining the final cut.

(6-8 months)

Total Estimated Time: 18-24 Months

Estimated Budget

As the lead filmmakers, we've chosen not to draw salaries, covering only essential living and travel expenses to maintain focus on the project's quality and impact.

This decision enables us to allocate a greater share of the budget to ensuring the documentary meets professional standards and reaches its full potential.

Use of Excess Funds

While our budget is carefully structured to ensure a high-impact production, should additional funds become available, these will be reinvested into enhancing the documentary itself.

As independent filmmakers, we are committed to ensuring that every resource directly contributes to the quality and reach of the project, rather than personal gain. While we remain realistic about budget constraints, we are fully prepared to reinvest any unforeseen surplus to make *Born on Death Row* as powerful and far-reaching as possible.

Pre-Production £30,000

- Research & Script Development 9,000
- Location Scouting & Permits 7,000
- Legal & Ethical Clearances 8,000
- Administrative & Overheads 6,000

Production £86,000

- Principal Filming 39,000
- Equipment & Insurance 13,000
- Travel & Accommodation 18,000
- Undercover & Specialist Footage 8,000
- Misc. Production Costs 8,500

Post-Production £60,000

- Editing 26,000
- Animations & Infographics 9,000
- Music & Sound Design 10,000
- Final Review & Colour Grading 8,000
- Focus Group Testing 7,000

Distribution £22,000

- Festival Submissions & PR 9,000
- Social Media Campaigns 5,000
- Outreach & Educational Materials 5,000
- Online Platform Prep 3,000

Contingency £18,000

Total Estimated Budget: £216,000



Closing Statement

Born on Death Row is not merely a film; it is a call to action. By exposing the harrowing realities faced by beagles and countless other animals in the name of science, this documentary seeks to challenge entrenched norms, spark critical dialogue, and inspire systemic change.

Through a combination of investigative journalism, cutting-edge science, and deeply emotive storytelling, the film aims to:

Confront audiences with the ethical and scientific failures of animal testing.

Advocate animal-free methods that are scientifically valid.

Push for transparency and accountability within governments and corporations complicit in maintaining the status quo.

It celebrates the courage of activists, the brilliance of innovators, and the moral imperative for change.

This documentary is poised to make a profound impact—raising awareness, challenging perceptions, and championing a future where no animal is born into a life of suffering.



Contact

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Q4 2026