

BVSi documents animal rescue efforts following Hurricane Katrina

Below: On location on Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana for Noah's Wish, crew sets up the camera at a condo/marina while cinematographer James Russo (yellow hat) discusses logistics with a Noah's Wish coordinator and a Slidell Animal Control officer.

During the dark days in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, A.J. Russo saw stark television images of pets and other animals lost in the disaster zone. She also saw a story about how Noah's Wish, a not-for-profit animal welfare organization, was helping. Russo is co-owner of BVSi, a commercial production house in South Florida.

"It was heartbreaking," she says. "I thought maybe they could use help fundraising or something else and emailed Noah's Wish to volunteer our services."

Noah's Wish accepted her offer and asked if BVSi would shoot footage documenting the situation and the work being done by the organization. She quickly organized a volunteer crew, including one member who flew from Manhattan at his own expense. Russo's brother, James Russo, did most of the shooting.

The crew made two journeys to Slidell, Louisiana, to film volunteers at work. They carried a Super 16mm, lightweight ARRiflex SR-2 camera with a set of prime lenses and an Angenieux 12-120mm zoom. The equipment was donated by Camera Group International, which is based in Hollywood, Florida.

"It was run-and-gun shooting, with almost no lighting," says James. "We had to respond fast to the circumstances and to changing lighting conditions."

At times, James became a part of the animal rescue crew. He once took his belt off and used it as a collar and leash for a lost dog.

James mainly handheld the camera, though he occasionally mounted it on a tripod or high hat. Images were recorded on either Eastman EXR 50D 7245 or Kodak Vision 250D 7246 films. He used

a polarizer and neutral density filters, and occasionally a reflector to bounce light into darker areas.

Cineworks in Miami donated film processing and telecine services.

The footage produced by BVSi was requested to be used by Animal Planet, CNN, MSNBC, **The Today Show** and **The Ellen DeGeneres Show**, among others. BVSi is also planning to use the footage to produce Public Service Announcements that will air nationally.

To read more about how BVSi captured film footage in the Gulf Coast, go to www.kodak.com/go/motion. ■



PHOTOS: BY JOHN LABRIOLA

Above: (L to R) Camera assistants/operators Jorge Valdés-Iga and Tevo Diaz with cinematographer James Russo on location in Slidell, Louisiana preparing to shoot a scene for Noah's Wish.