



It's not easy to cram 44 years of animal misery into one nine-minute documentary, but filmmaker Daniel Azarian has done just that.

David Kirby (author, *Death at SeaWorld*), *The Dodo*

Director Daniel Azarian paints a compelling picture of Lolita's situation.

Emily Greenberg, *San Juan Journal*

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF LOLITA THE PERFORMING ORCA

Featuring Dr. Ingrid Visser

Directed by Daniel Azarian

United States / 9 minutes / Documentary Short  
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## Synopsis

In 1970, a four year old killer whale named Tokitae was brutally taken from her mother in the US waters of Washington State and brought to the Miami Seaquarium, where she was placed in a 35 foot wide tank and renamed "Lolita." She has lived there ever since.

Forty-three years later world-renowned orca biologist Dr. Ingrid N. Visser, founder of the Orca Research Trust (New Zealand), visits Lolita for the first time. This short film, produced on behalf of the Washington-based Orca Network, documents Dr. Visser's visit as well as her thoughts and scientific observations concerning Lolita's current living conditions.

## The Issue

The Animal Welfare Act (AWA) of the United States defines that a tank for an orca the size of Lolita must be at least 48ft in each horizontal direction, with a straight line of travel across the middle. Lolita's tank is 35 feet wide. Lolita's tank size, as well as other issues surrounding her care, are a clear violation of the AWA.

The Orca Network has developed the Lolita Retirement plan, to have Lolita moved to an ocean sanctuary in her home US waters of Washington State.

## Director's Statement

Daniel Azarian

The Academy Award winning documentary "The Cove" completely opened my eyes to the brutality of the captive whale and dolphin industry; it simply was unfathomable to me that this capture and slaughter is currently going on in the 21st Century. It struck such a personal cord that I researched online, which led me to the heartbreaking story of Lolita. I created the "Save Lolita" Public Service Announcement which eventually led to working on "A Day on the Life of Lolita the Performing Orca."

I was honored collaborate with Dr. Visser. What I feel makes our film so important is that we capture first-hand the witness of an established and respected orca biologist. She shares her thoughts on captive orca behavior, with Lolita just a few feet away. Anyone hearing her speak - scientist or layperson - will be left in no doubt as to the cruelty of this practice.

The general public needs to be educated about the high level of social, emotional and cognitive abilities that whales and dolphin possess, and how this knowledge factors into the ethics of keeping such intelligent animals in captivity. I strongly believe that if people knew the truth about where these animals came from and how captivity alters their lives, they would not support it. The time has come for us to evolve and realize it is no longer ethical to keep these sentient creatures in what basically amounts to a sea circus. - Daniel Azarian



**Dr. Ingrid Visser**  
Executive Producer

Dr. Ingrid Visser is an internationally acclaimed authority on orca, having established research projects and studied them all over the globe. She was the subject of the BBC acclaimed documentary, "The Woman Who Swims with Killer Whales", and is the founder and principal researcher of the Orca Research Trust whose mission is to protect orca and their habitat through conservation, education and scientific research. Please visit [www.OrcaResearch.org](http://www.OrcaResearch.org) for more information on Dr. Visser and her work.



**Daniel Azarian**  
Executive Producer / Director

Daniel Azarian is an award-winning filmmaker and creative director of commercials and branded entertainment. He has helmed national television spots for major cable, as well as having his work licensed on mobile networks in the U.S., China, and the UK. Featured brands are Netflix, AOL Music, Horizon Organic, Sony Music Entertainment, and 3M. Credits include the music videos "Teenage Popstar Girl", "There Will Never Be Any Peace" for the Grammy award-winning The Blind Boys of Alabama, "Mass Extinction No. Six" for Whisperado, as well as the award-winning PSAs for "Save Lolita," and the Anti-Violence Project's "Bullying is Violence" campaign.



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FEATURING  
DR. INGRID VISSER

DIRECTED BY  
DANIEL AZARIAN

UNDERDOG ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS 'A  
DAY IN THE LIFE OF LOLITA THE  
PERFORMING ORCA' WITH DR. INGRID N.  
VISSER (ORCA RESEARCH TRUST) PRODUCED  
BY DANIEL AZARIAN & DR. INGRID N. VISSER  
SOUND EDITOR DAN WALSH PENN COVE  
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TERRELL  
NEWBY & WALLIE FUNK DIRECTED BY  
DANIEL AZARIAN PRODUCED BY  
UNDERDOG ENTERTAINMENT



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