



Backtrack Boys Film Synopsis

Short

A group of troubled boys are on a perilous course toward jail until they meet up with a free-wheeling jackaroo, Bernie Shakeshaft, and hit the road with his legendary dog jumping team. This inspiring coming of age story follows the boys as they strive to turn their lives around - and the dogs that help tame their wild ways.

Long

A group of troubled boys are on a perilous course towards jail until they meet up with the rough talking, free-wheeling jackaroo, Bernie Shakeshaft, and hit the road with his legendary dog jumping team.

This observational documentary, filmed over two years, follows boys in a youth program that Bernie runs from a shed on the outskirts of Armidale, a rural town in Australia. On the road, the boys find their voice, make great friendships and the dogs become national champions. But as the boy's sleep under the stars at night the trauma is never too far away. With their survival and futures at stake they must constantly step up, push themselves, support each other and some days can be hard. This inspiring coming of age story reveals the challenges and triumphs these boys face as they try to find their place in the world, and the dogs that help tame their wild ways.

A life-affirming documentary, Backtrack Boys explores Bernie's philosophy in action and through the journey of the kids in his care. It reveals how he helps them to navigate their relationships, deal with personal trauma, take responsibility for their own decisions and gain practical job skills so they can eventually create a sustainable future for themselves.