



Glen Campbell: I'll Be Me Discussion Guide

Director: James Keach

Year: 2014

Time: 116 min

You might know this director from:

Waiting for Forever (2010)

Blind Dating (2006)

Disease of the Wind (2002)

Camouflage (2001)

The Stars Fell on Henrietta (1995)

FILM SUMMARY

Glen Campbell's legacy spans musical genres, decades, and time zones. Following Glen and his family on a final sold-out tour of 151 shows, *GLEN CAMPBELL: I'LL BE ME* documents perhaps the greatest achievement of this esteemed man's life.

In 2011, the Campbell family announced that Glen had Alzheimer's disease. Rather than withdrawing from the public eye and caring for Glen behind sealed doors, the Campbell family hit the road, placing him in center stage, right at the heart of his passion. This decision brought risks, joys, and comedic episodes. But ultimately, music revealed its healing powers. Glen's children bonded with him through his love of music, while fans around the globe experienced his incredible talent one last time. Glen became a real-life spokesperson for Alzheimer's.

The film introduces us to fellow famous musicians who were affected by Glen's musical heritage, including those who'd also lost a loved one to Alzheimer's. We witness the unbreakable strength of Glen's wife, Kim, and we watch Glen's children accompany him on stage, supporting him whether he's lost or found. A raw, bold look at the role of memory in our lives, *I'LL BE ME* is a touching testament to the broad reach of music, the necessity of those we love to keep us going in our darkest days, and the public's full-hearted reception of one family's brave decision to bring a universal disease out of shameful hiding.

FILM THEMES

Glen Campbell crafted a musical legacy over the course of a lengthy career. His fall from grace was brought into the light in order to heal a family, a fan base, and millions of people afflicted with Alzheimer's.

MEMORIES

By stripping memories away, Alzheimer's disease arguably robs people of their very essence. Everything we are comprised of, the daily motions we go through, even the act of loving, is entwined in memory's web. From brushing our teeth to recognizing the softness in our own heart when we look at a loved one can be traced to a previous moments. As Campbell's brain lost its ability to recall memories, 75 years slipped into the ether. What once defined him became irrelevant, and this once empowered man became a memory-less shell of who he once was.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

Take a silent room, fill it with music, and watch the vacancy become a living organism. "Music does something to the molecules," said Sheryl Crow. The doctors who examined Campbell during The Goodbye Tour were astonished by music's healing effects. How could a man who got lost on his way to the bathroom in his own home play an intricate guitar solo in front of thousands of fans in a packed venue? The transformational powers of music uplifted Campbell, gave him strength and capacity in the midst of struggle, and worked against his downfall.

CARETAKING

"He clings to me like I'm his anchor for: who am I, where am I. I'm his safety blanket. He wants me around all the time," stated Kim Campbell, Glen's wife of over 30 years. Alzheimer's puts individuals in a highly vulnerable state, and thus they display a number of self-defense mechanisms. Those with Alzheimer's are dependent on caretakers to keep them alive. In the case of Glen, his wife and children hold him up, serve as his memory, direct him through the mundane daily tasks, and bear the brunt of his frustrations. In all Alzheimer's cases, it's the caretakers who inherit the right to choose what is best when the patient no longer can.

EXPOSURE

Before filming, filmmaker James Keach found most information on Alzheimer's to be depressing tales of families who isolated themselves from the world and embraced the shame that seemed to be an inherent part of the disease. Choosing to hit the road, the Campbell family actively decided to remove the stigma from Alzheimer's. Glen stepped in front of the public. In the limelight, night after night, he exposed the ups and downs of his illness, demystifying Alzheimer's painful, quiet reality. Where once there was silence, there now was music. The Goodbye Tour became an exercise in making the best of a demoralizing disease.

"There's nothing wrong with me. I just can't remember anything."

Glen Campbell

"Music magically makes a difference in everyone's life. It's the fire that drives us on, gets us through our roughest, hardest times."

John Carter Cash

"Life is memories."

Keith Urban

FILM FACTS:

- Director James Keach initially met Glen Campbell through music producer Julian Raymond, who produced Campbell's last album and was working with Keach's 14-year-old son at the time. Raymond encouraged Keach to film Campbell's final tour, which was initially scheduled to last 5 weeks but ended up taking in 151 sold-out shows. Keach had previously co-produced "Walk The Line," a chronicle of musician Johnny Cash's life. However, he was reluctant to film Glen Campbell due to all the negative information he had seen regarding Alzheimer's disease.
- Glen Campbell has been married four times, and has five sons and three daughters. He has been married to his current wife, Kim, since 1982.
- Over the course of his 60-year career, Glen Campbell has released over 70 albums. 81 of his singles have reached the Billboard Country Chart, the Billboard Hot 100, or the Adult Contemporary Chart. He has sold 45 million records and been awarded 12 Recording Industry of America (R.I.A.A.) Gold albums, four Platinum albums, and one Double-Platinum album.
- Campbell won four Grammys in 1967 alone.
- From 1969 to 1972, Campbell hosted The Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour, a music and comedy variety show. His song "Gentle On My Mind" was the show's theme song. From 1982 to 1983, he hosted The Glen Campbell Music Show. Guests included Willie Nelson and Emmylou Harris.
- Alzheimer's disease was first defined in 1906 by German psychiatrist and neuropathologist Alois Alzheimer, who spent a great deal of time working in mental asylums. He observed Auguste Deter, who had early onset dementia, and identified her as the first person with Alzheimer's.
- Although Alzheimer's disease was identified over 100 years ago, focused research into the causes, symptoms, and cures has only been in effect since the 1980s. Most people are diagnosed with the disease from the age of 65, although the neurological shifts associated with Alzheimer's may begin 20 years before symptoms occur. The disease is not a normal part of aging, and research is looking into the primary reasons why it appears in certain individuals.
- None of the medication currently available for Alzheimer's can stop or slow the death of neurons in the brain, which causes symptoms of the disease. The U.S. Food & Drug Administration has approved five drugs, which temporarily improve symptoms of the disease by increasing the amount of neurotransmitters in the brain.
- Ashley Campbell, Glen's youngest daughter, didn't start learning the banjo until she was in college. Before playing the banjo, she wanted to be an actress on Saturday Night Live.
- Glen's children Ashley (banjo) and Shannon (guitar) have a duo called Victoria Ghost. His son Cal (drums) has a band called Instant People.

WAYS TO INFLUENCE

1. **Learn** more about the healing powers of music or donate to the mission of [the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function](#) - a non-profit agency that offers music therapy programs.
2. **Donate** to [the "I'll Be Me" Alzheimer's Fund](#)
3. **Consider** joining [Walk To End Alzheimer's](#), a charity event organized by the Alzheimer's Association. Move towards a cure!
4. **Read** "Life With My Father, Glen Campbell", written by Debby Campbell, Glen's oldest daughter.
5. **Sign** a petition to support Alzheimer's research and raise awareness of the essential work of caregivers. Visit [The Alzheimers Site](#) for more information and petitions.

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