

"Film for a fallen friend"

By Danette Dooley

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Just days after Kurt Kuenne got the devastating news Dr. Andrew Bagby had been murdered, he decided to make a tribute film to his lifelong friend.

"I wanted to go around and collect all the best footage and everyone's memories of Andrew to put them all in one place for friends and family to have," Kuenne said while in St. John's last week.

When he learned a few months after Andrew's death that the woman accused of murdering his friend (Dr. Shirley Turner) was carrying Andrew's child, Kuenne's project took on a whole new meaning.

"Then I knew I'd be putting this film together for Zachary. And that's when I came up with the title, *Dear Zachary: a letter to a son about his father.*"

Kuenne's plan was to keep working on the movie and give it to Andrew's child when he was old enough to digest the details surrounding his paternity.

The movie would also follow Zachary through the years.

"I was here in July 2003, when I made my road trip across the country. I got to meet Zachary and I shot plenty of footage of him that month when I was here. Then, a month later, everything that happened happened."

What happened was that Turner drowned herself and the one-year-old, most likely by jumping off a wharf into Conception Bay South.

A recent child death review concluded that Zachary didn't have to die, that he should never have been in his mother's custody.

With the second tragedy, Kuenne's plans for his movie changed again.

The two-hour feature documentary will now pay tribute to Andrew's life as well as Zachary's short time on earth.

Kuenne aims to have the movie finished in time to submit it to the Toronto Film Festival next year.

While he's put thousands of his own dollars into the project, he needs to raise about \$175,000 to complete the film and welcomes donations toward that goal.

The Internet Movie Database describes Kuenne as an award-winning filmmaker and composer who began making films during his childhood.

"I started making movies when I was seven, and I used to force Andrew to star in them," Kuenne laughs.

"And I have all my raw footage from my original pictures. I'm glad I kept everything."

Any proceeds from the film will be split between the Dr. Andrew Bagby and son Zachary Memorial Bursary at Memorial University's Medical School and the Dr. Andrew Bagby Memorial Scholarship at Latrobe Hospital in Pennsylvania, where Andrew worked at the time of his murder.

An honours graduate of the USC School of Cinema-Television, Kuenne was named one of the top 25 new faces of indie film by Filmmaker Magazine.

Dear Zachary: a letter to a son about his father may prove that forecast correct.

"I'm hoping if this story can be told to the general public, it will help make some positive changes in this world," he says.

"I'm hoping it will be a compelling and interesting story, and that people seeing it will come away with the feeling that they're still alive so they can still do anything they want."