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Documentary 'Dear Zachary' is a True Labor of Love

One-of-a-kind documentary about the bizarre aftermath of a crime of passion. The film was made by the victim's childhood friend

LA.com Staff
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BY BOB STRAUSS >FILM CRITIC

Lots of people loved Andrew Bagby. Including, apparently, the woman who killed him.

Andrew's childhood friend Kurt Kuenne grew up to be a filmmaker. Andrew wanted to be a doctor, and all evidence points to his having been shot by Dr. Shirley Turner, a medical school lover he'd broken up with.

When Turner fled the U.S. to her native Canada, then announced she was pregnant with Andrew's child, Kuenne vowed to make "Dear Zachary." Gathering footage from the films they made together as kids, Bagby family home movies and interviews with Andrew's many adoring friends and relatives, Kuenne intended it to be a gift for the little boy, so he could know something about the father he'd never meet.

The core of the movie is Andrew's parents, David and Kathleen Bagby, and their efforts to secure custody of little Zachary while Turner's extradition case crawled through Canada's glacier-paced and outlandishly lenient legal system. You don't have to be a victim's-rights advocate to share the outrage of what these traumatized people suffer to secure their grandson's safety - nor to be inspired by how they manage to turn tragedy into something worthwhile.

Kuenne uses ingenious montages and judicious pacing tactics to drive through reams of evidence, legal codes and other data that, in most documentaries, would leave viewers' eyes glazed over.

Bob Strauss, (818) 713-3670 bob.strauss@dailynews.com

[review>](#)

DEAR ZACHARY

>**Not rated:** violence, language, children in peril.

>**Running time:** 1 hr. 33 min.

>**Playing:** Sunset 5, West Hollywood.


>**In a nutshell:** One-of-a-kind documentary about the bizarre aftermath of a crime of passion. The film was made by the victim's childhood friend.

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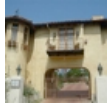
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