

SUN STAR

Mendelowitz shoots 'The Messenger', debuts it at UAF

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I glance down at the film booklet and see a gigantic pair of wings on the front cover and the title "The Messenger" printed across them. UAF film students and faculty began working on this film last summer.

The theatre has approximately fifty people in it. The lights dim and I take my seat to watch the preview.

Kade Mendelowitz created and directed "The Messenger." He got the idea for the film twelve years ago.

"I've never done a film that was this big before. I've done a lot of theater, I've worked on a lot of movies but never something this big," Mendelowitz said.

The film stars Carrie Baker stars Carrie Baker and Andrew Cassel. Baker plays Jessica Lamech. Lamech is the host of a popular talk show in Burbank, Calif. She is raped while leaving the doctor's office. I was shocked when I saw this because it was something I was not expecting.

After the assault, Lamech becomes pregnant and does not know whether the father of the baby is her husband or her attacker. Due to this, Lamech begins to lose faith in God. Cassel plays the messenger, whose name is Michael.

I have seen few films outside of Hollywood releases so at first I felt the film was a little jarring. The transitions

between scenes seemed rushed. However, after a while I got used to it. The acting was authentic and for a moment I forgot they were acting, they were just everyday people. The actors expressed the themes of redemption, anger, sadness, and morality genuinely. The scenes in which Michael talks to people before they do something morally wrong helped show how powerful, yet limited he was. In some scenes the people would listen. In others, they would not head his advice and instead, knowingly hurt others in the process.

Baker, who is also the Assistant Professor of Performance at UAF, was pregnant during filming. Baker said that her pregnancy help her connect with her character more. During one scene, I was almost to tears. The emotions of her character are so extreme due to the pain, confusion, and loss that she is feeling. I don't think anyone else could have done a better performance. "Emotion is always an interesting thing to deal with as an actor, you know, 'cause sometimes it's there and sometimes it's not," Baker said.

"To have someone of her caliber reading my words is a wonderful feeling," Mendelowitz said of Baker's performance.

Cassel did a great job at playing the messenger. However, at times I felt that his character was too robotic which took away from his message. Mendelowitz did a great job at writing the script.

During the talk show portion of the film, in which Lamech interviews Michael he explains to her how people have begun to lose their faith in God. Michael says the, "human population has grown faster than mankind's compassion." This quote is true for anyone, regardless of their belief. During the same scene, Michael says, "disbelief can always make a way to rationalize what the heart desires." I love this quote because this has been the theme in many of my classes this semester. They both discuss philosophical truths that can be applied to the world we currently live in.

The film gave UAF film students the opportunity to get hands-on experience. "It was exciting and informative and wonderful way to use the skills set we learned here at UAF in a practical, right-to-the minute was," said Tiana Hanson, who is the assistant director for the film.

The film April 28 is showing a preview. Mendelowitz is still going to edit a few things before the first and only showing on May 4. The film is rated PG-13. Students can pay \$3 to see the film. Faculty, staff, seniors, and military pay \$5 and adults that do not fit into either of categories pay \$6.

I encourage anyone who likes films about redemption, hope, and the power to move on to see this film. The philosophical and moral lessons of the film will stay with you for a long time.