

INTERVIEW

K.C. Bailey talks film career

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At some point during adolescence, nearly every child is asked the same dreaded question by an adult: What do you want to be when you grow up? For most adults, “firefighter” or “astronaut” is a sufficient answer. For University alumna K.C. Bailey, some explanation may have been necessary.

There are very few careers Bailey has not broken into at some point in her life. After receiving her bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees from the University, she pursued a career at the State Department specializing in nuclear non-proliferation. Exhausted by Washington, she settled down in Hawaii to open a lime farm with her husband. Now, she boldly enters the field of filmmaking.

Her debut film, “Revenge in Kind,” recounts the stories of victims-turned-victimizers and women who refuse to become statistics in the disturbing realm of sexual violence. For Bailey, the creation of strong female characters who stand up and fight back against sexual violence is critical to the film’s message. In fact, it was the very concept that drove her to become a filmmaker.

“I was watching a movie with my husband, and there was a woman who was being assaulted, and I just got really upset and left the room until that part was over,” Bailey said. “Later, I was talking to my husband about how it seemed to me that women were always the underdog and were never fighting back and were never shown to have a backbone.”

Bailey’s dismay at the depiction of women in popular culture would set her on a course for some do-it-yourself activism. Recognizing the lack of strong female characters, Bailey decided she would just have to create her own.

“My husband said, ‘Why don’t you write your own movie script?’ And I did,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUZI PROKELL

UI alumna K.C. Bailey recently released her first feature film, “Revenge in Kind,” which she both wrote and directed.

But, like any filmmaker will tell you, an unprecedented amount of work the audience does not see goes on behind the camera. Factor this into her first time making a movie, and it’s pretty clear that Bailey had her work laid out for her. After getting the ball rolling, Bailey encountered a few speed bumps along the journey.

“There was a very steep learning curve because it is my first movie. I did everything from the financing and accounting and payroll to locations. Everything, really, just everything. I had to study a lot,” Bailey said. “The main thing was to surround myself with the best people I could. And they were a huge part of the success of the movie.”

In the end, her hard work paid off. “Revenge in Kind” is a professional production far better-produced than other films in its budget range. Solid writing, sleek interior design and a talented cast turn the film into the intellectually stimulating experience it is.

The timing of the film could not have been more appropriate. In the age of the Weinstein effect and the #MeToo movement, it seems like sexual violence is a topic not leaving the national

conversation anytime soon. But, according to Bailey, the release of her film coinciding with recent events was sheer accident.

“The movie is highly political. But did I know the MeToo movement was coming? Not at all,” she said.

Bailey has a lot of wisdom to share with the world. From her time at the State Department denuclearizing the world to her ventures into Hawaiian lime farming, she has learned a thing or two about life. Fortunately for her audiences, she is confident “Revenge in Kind” will not be her last film. She already has a script drafted for her next project that includes international shooting locations.

It is never too late to start something worth doing. Bailey’s accomplishments have proven that. Now, she seeks to encourage others to pursue their life goals.

“My advice to women entering filmmaking is the advice I would give to anyone in any profession: If you try hard enough, and you really work to become the best at what you do, you will succeed,” Bailey said.

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