

# Santa Barbara Filmmaker: Kurt Kuenne

## Shuffle

By Jeannette Casillas / CASA

**A**N OUT OF SEQUENCE LIFE reveals insights and moving moments that unfold into a love story in Kurt Kuenne's movie *Shuffle*, which will screen on Tuesday, January 31st at 7pm at Metro 4 Theatre 1.

"The idea for this film came out of a brainstorming session I had with a colleague and I immediately sparked to the idea because I've always been fascinated by films that play with structure," shared Director Kurt Kuenne. "This idea presented extremely rich possibilities for telling a story in an unusual way. I loved the supernatural mystery that the story presented. I've always been a fan of stories which take a seemingly ordinary person and put them in an extraordinary or fantastical circumstance."

*Shuffle*, starring TJ Thyne from the hit TV show *Bones*, is the tale of a man who begins experiencing his life out of order. Every day he wakes up at a different age, on a different day of his life, never knowing where or when he's going to be once he falls asleep. He's terrified and wants it to stop – until he notices a pattern in his experience, and works to uncover why this is happening to him – and what or who is behind it.

"The film is like a big *Twilight Zone* episode crossed with a dash of Frank Capra fantasy and, like those old pictures, it's in

black and white," explained Kuenne.

When Kuenne wrote the film he knew it could be produced on a low budget. He later realized that the film would be perfect for his friend TJ Thyne. "TJ read the script and loved it," shared Kuenne. "We decided to take advantage of his summer hiatus from *Bones* and shot the movie quickly before he had to return to work in the fall."



Kurt Kuenne,  
Writer/Director

"I think the story is unique," shared Kuenne. "Its twists are involving and its surprises and pay-offs are satisfying. It starts off appearing to be simply a mystery/genre film, but as the layers come off, it reveals itself to be much more than that. It starts as a frantic

search to uncover a mystery, then reveals itself to be a love story at its core. It melds a more modern structural aesthetic with an old-fashioned love of stories that satisfy and uplift. It's a tapestry that spans nine decades."

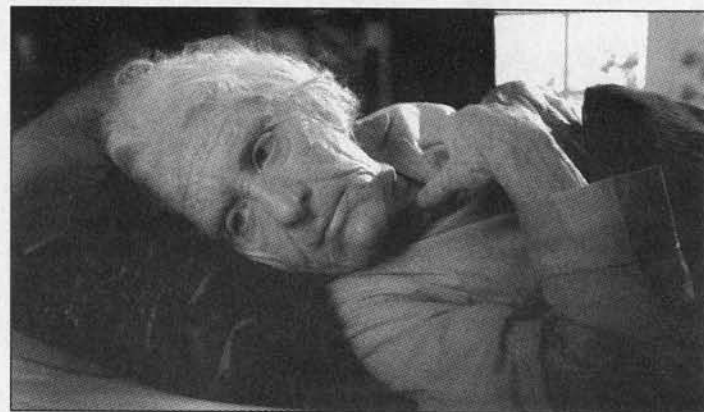
According to Kuenne, this script could not have been made as written without the old age makeup. At one point the script calls for TJ's character to be 92 years old. "I had always assumed we would just cast an old man who looked like

TJ for that sequence," Kuenne shared. However, Kuenne hired one of the best make-up artists in the field - Academy Award-winner Barney Burman - to do all the old age make-up for his film.

"Barney said to me, 'I can make TJ look 92.' And he did," recalled Kuenne. "The night that TJ emerged from Barney's studio after five hours in the make-up chair and stepped onto the set as a 92 year old man was truly astonishing. I've since shown the film to people who didn't initially believe that was a make-up job and they thought I'd actually hired a 92 year old man."

John J. Thyne, TJ Thyne's brother and Santa Barbara resident, is "one of the individuals most responsible for arranging

the film's financing and making the production a reality in the first place," shared Kuenne. John introduced the film to the festival, which is why the film made it into the Santa Barbara filmmaker category. The film also got off the ground with the help of TJ Thyne, who not only was the lead actor, but he also helped produce the film. "TJ tapped into the enthusiasm of the folks at his repertory company, Theatre



TJ Thyne as 92 year old Lovell Milo in *Shuffle*

Junkies, to help us pull it off," Kuenne shared.

Kuenne's love of film started when he was only four years old. "After watching *Star Wars* I decided right then and there that I wanted to make movies," Kuenne recalled. "I began making movies with whatever I could get my hands on. First, it was my father's Super 8 camera. Later, I bought the best VHS equipment available, which finally let me start using sound. I played the piano and wrote music from a young age as well, so I also began scoring my films at that time, first by banging out scores on the piano, then by using synthesizers."

Kuenne, a Burbank resident, graduated magna cum laude from the USC's School of Cinema-Television in 1995, where he won the Harold Lloyd Scholarship in Film Editing, and studied Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television at the USC School of Music under the tutelage of classic film composers Buddy Baker and David Raksin.

For more information about the film visit [www.shufflethemovie.com](http://www.shufflethemovie.com)



TJ Thyne as Lovell Milo in *Shuffle*