

Locals Collaborate on Script About Timothy Treadwell

■ 'The Bear Dreamer' Ponders the Tumultuous Life of a Man Dedicated to Grizzlies

Malibu residents Rebecca Dmytryk and Lindsey Bell have written a script tentatively named "The Bear Dreamer" about environmentalist and bear enthusiast Timothy Treadwell, who was killed with his companion, Amie Huguenard, by a bear while camping in Alaska in October, 2003.

Three years in the writing, the screenplay, through small vignettes, examines Treadwell's life—from trophy-winning diver in high school, through the turmoil of battling drugs and alcohol, his abusive father and to his work in Alaska.

Always fascinated by bears, he found his salvation in 1990 when he took his first trip to Alaska. He camped out in Katmai National Park, where he lived among the grizzly bears, studying their ways and habits. This was the first of many annual trips he would take, some lasting for as long as four months at a time.

The writers, former girlfriends of Treadwell, began



COLLABORATION—Authors Lindsey Bell and Rebecca Dmytryk reunited at Timothy Treadwell's funeral and began work on the script.

their collaboration, in 2003 after seeing each other at Treadwell's funeral.

Spurred by the negative press that his controversial life and death had raised, and the way he was portrayed in Werner Herzog's documentary, "Grizzly Man," they began their story.

"It was a big impetus for us," said Bell. "There was so much negative press. We wanted him to have the legacy he deserves."

Beside interviewing friends and other people involved in Treadwell's work with the grizzlies, the women had a wealth of information in the many

letters, postcards and videos that Treadwell sent to them. "He sent tapes and letters to each of us," said Dmytryk. "Much of what's in there (the script) are his words verbatim."

Of the script, Dmytryk, who is the daughter of legendary film director Edward Dmytryk, whose body of work includes "The Caine Mutiny" and "Raintree County," says, "It took its own form over three years, changing dramatically—as content came in, it would change shape—it became its own animal as we worked on it."

Bell, whom Treadwell lovingly addressed as Ms. Bell, accompanied him on two trips to Katmai National Park and describes the trips as magical. "He taught me photography and always encouraged me to write about my wilderness experience. It was such a magical time—every animal had its own name."

Saving the grizzlies became Treadwell's mission in life. He would spend up to four months a year in Alaska, and the rest of the year speaking at schools and other forums, as well as appearing on David Letterman's Late



"THE BEAR DREAMER"—Timothy Treadwell's turbulent life and controversial work with grizzly bears is the subject of the screenplay. "He always lived on the edge," said Dmytryk.

Night to educate the public about the plight of the bears. He also co-founded Grizzly People, a nonprofit to save the bears.

Treadwell gained a reputation as somewhat of an eccentric, and although charming, was reportedly prone to temperamental outbursts. Both Dmytryk and Bell agreed that he was happiest and most comfortable in Alaska with the bears, foxes and other wildlife, which he individually named. For instance, there was Quincey, "the bear with the droopy lower lip," Letterman, after David Letterman, and one of the most beloved was Timmy, the fox that Treadwell befriended

early in his travels and along with his mate and kits, would be constant companions for Treadwell.

Although Dmytryk found the writing cathartic, Bell described the process as "hard and painful."

They have no preferences who they would like to play themselves, but their first choice for Treadwell is Robert Downey, Jr. They feel that he would be able to portray all the facets of Treadwell's personality.

"I hope this story is inspirational to those who didn't have a good upbringing," said Dmytryk. "Timothy found his passion—he was brave enough to find it."

BY ROBBY MAZZA

**End of Summer
Blow Out Sale!**

