DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



CJ's mother, Hallie Twomey, taught me what resilience looks like, about the depths of sadness, and what it means to summon the courage to get up and face the next day in the midst of unrelenting grief.

Hallie trusted us to chronicle her family's story during a period of unimaginable loss and great change, and we never took that trust lightly. Without hesitation, the Twomey family embraced the documentary process, allowing our cameras to become an ever-present part of their lives. We were given access to their day-to-day activities, such as accompanying CJ's younger brother Connor to the welding shop where he works, chatting with CJ's father John early in the morning as he drove to work, and spending countless hours with Hallie at home, as she packed ashes at her dining room table.

What we witnessed was a mother on a mission. And it soon became clear that Hallie's Facebook posts describing her grief and guilt in brutally honest terms had struck a chord that resounded far and wide. In response, she was inundated with heartfelt messages of condolence and thanks, both for sharing her pain and for giving others the strength to do so themselves. The Scattering CJ project took off before our eyes, and soon CJ's ashes were traveling the globe, from that dining room table in Maine to hundreds of destinations the world over.

At the outset of our filming, we asked ourselves if participating in the documentary process would become the lasting testimonial to her son that Hallie so craved. But despite all the good that had been wrought from the tragedy, and for so many all over the world, would she ever be able to find her own peace?

The questions we posed defied easy answers. They still do.

It has been 10 years since CJ's death and nearly five years since we began our own journey alongside the family. In this time, it has been a privilege to get to know the Twomeys, to meet some of the "scatterers," and even end up working with one named Kelly Vella, an Australian graphic designer. Kelly not only took CJ's ashes to Fiji with an entourage of extended family, but also generously donated her time and talents to a long-distance collaboration resulting in the film's closing graphic that strikingly illuminates the 1,000-plus destinations where CJ has been scattered. Fittingly, like the scattering project itself, this film was also enriched by the kindness and gifts of strangers.

Our dedicated team aimed to make a film that amplifies humanity's innate goodness, adds strength to the purpose of a heartbroken mom and hopefully helps change lives. Ultimately, Scattering CJ *might reveal a truth to others that we now understand more keenly than before we embarked on this journey: that from the darkest loss can emerge the brightest of life.*

– Andrea Kalin