



'HAZE' documents drinking-ritual death of college student

12:00 AM CDT on Wednesday, April 1, 2009

By **MICHAEL GRANBERRY** / The Dallas Morning News
mgranberry@dallasnews.com

At the end of a Saturday night screening of *HAZE*, a chilling documentary about the death of Lynn Gordon Bailey Jr., his mother and stepfather took questions from the audience.

The AFI Dallas International Film Festival crowd at the Magnolia Theatre eagerly raised hands to ask about the kid from Dallas and why "Gordie," as he was called, died such a tragic death.

Michael Lanahan, Bailey's stepfather and the chairman of Dallas-based Greystone Communities, noted that soon after Gordie's death – the 18-year-old incoming freshman died of alcohol poisoning after a fraternity hazing ritual at the University of Colorado in 2004 – he and his wife launched the Gordie Foundation.

Bailey's mother, Leslie Lanahan, said *HAZE* has proven to be a powerful tool, as has passing out cards that list the warning signs of alcohol poisoning.

Two years after Bailey's death, a girl attending a high school prom in Dallas drank too much and passed out in the bathroom. Another girl happened to have one of the cards in her wallet.

"She said, 'We've got to get this girl to the hospital,' " Leslie Lanahan said. "They called the girl's family, and they wanted her brought home. But this one girl, who knew of Gordie's situation and who knew of the warning signals, said, 'No, we have to go to the hospital.' "

Doctors at the hospital said later that, had the girl been taken home, she might have died. "She made a tough call," Michael Lanahan said of the good Samaritan, who at the time was only 16. "She saved a life."

The Lanahans have enlisted the help of actress Robin Wright Penn, who's serving as the national chairperson and spokesperson of the Gordie Foundation. In another screening Friday, Penn said she chose to help the Lanahans because she, too, is the mother of teenage boys.

Apart from telling a riveting story of what happened to Gordie Bailey and why, *HAZE* does a masterful job of showing, as Michael Lanahan, 62, puts it, "that this isn't the college we went to," meaning his generation. In addition to binge drinking, today's campuses have become feeding grounds for embarrassing YouTube videos, with student after underaged student being exposed, whether they're drunk, undressed or both.

As *HAZE* demonstrates, today's campuses are arenas, as Michael Lanahan says, where "everything seems to be extreme ... extreme sports, extreme pornography, extreme drinking."

The question is: What can be done about it?

He spoke Tuesday with the mother of a boy who died in a drinking incident at a California college four months ago. What's needed, he says, is leadership, and he cited one positive example – David Boren, president of the University of Oklahoma.

"He defines leadership," Lanahan said. "He said, 'This campus is going to go dry.' Boren has helped make OU a much better environment. He gives you two chances, but three strikes and you're out. He's set boundaries for kids who are looking for boundaries." **READ MORE** about AFI Dallas. moviesblog.guidelive.com

Plan your life

HAZE can be seen free at www.snagfilms.com, www.hulu.com or www.gordie.org, where it's available in full-length (81 mins.) or shortened versions. It's available for purchase (\$250 for high schools, \$400 for colleges).