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# All Eyes On: Matt Szewczyk

BY ANNE REBAR  
Staff Reporter

A haunting melody begins to play, and stoic scenes of rural Missouri flash by on-screen as the film "Leo" starts to roll.

"Leo" was the vision of senior Matt Szewczyk, and after a year in the making, it is ready for public viewing. Szewczyk, an English and philosophy major, originally came to Truman with thoughts of entering law school and getting into politics. He served as Student Senate President in 2007-2008. However, after working two summers in Washington, D.C., shooting commercials for the Center for American Progress, he redirected his goals toward a career in film.

"I realized that it was what I enjoyed getting up for in the morning," Szewczyk said.

"Leo," a 40-minute film, tells of two butchers stuck in a small town grocery store. The plot thickens when one butcher becomes infatuated with a grocery store regular. "Leo" premieres at 6:30 p.m. Saturday in Violette Hall 1000.

Szewczyk was inspired to make a movie because of a story a student in his creative writing class wrote.

"I was really excited about the story and wanted to produce it, and he kind of shot me down and said he didn't think that the story was ready to go to film," Szewczyk said. "I had been doing a little fundraising and planning already, and so he told me I should take whatever work [I] had already done and go write and shoot my own film, and I was like, 'All right, well I'll do that then.'"

Szewczyk used books to teach himself about the production process. He said "The Grammar of Film Language" by Daniel Arijon was by far the best book.

"It had these diagrams showing how to set up pretty much any shot you would ever want to do," Szewczyk said. "It is an incredible book because it is just like shot-by-shot camera movement, angles, everything, and it really conceptualizes it for conveying emotions and how to accomplish what you want with a camera."

Szewczyk funded more than half of "Leo's" budget by himself and then fundraised from family members and local business owners to obtain the rest. He said the University provided equipment such as lights and the camera, and the Filmmaker's Club provided all of the tape stock.

"What I paid for out of pocket was, I rented a 35 mm adapter, which basically attaches onto the front of the high-def camera and allows you to shoot through mountable lenses, which allowed

## "Leo" Premiere

- When? 6:30 p.m. Saturday
- Where? Violette Hall 1000

us to have a lot of depth in the cinematography and the images, versus video where everything is very flat and 2-D," Szewczyk said.

Szewczyk held casting calls in various locations around Missouri to find actors to fill the roles in the film. They shot during the 2009 spring semester in a grocery store in Paris, Mo., as well as in a few locations around Kirksville. Most of the film's characters are younger because Szewczyk said he wanted to relate to a college-age audience.

"I wanted to tell a story that college students would also be interested in, and so our characters are young people, and they are dealing with issues that young people deal with," Szewczyk said. "I kind of drew a little bit from my love for philosophy and based it off of a thought experiment done by a French existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, that explores peoples' decision making and their value systems. In the end this movie is about what people value, what they dream about, and how far they'd go to pursue those dreams."

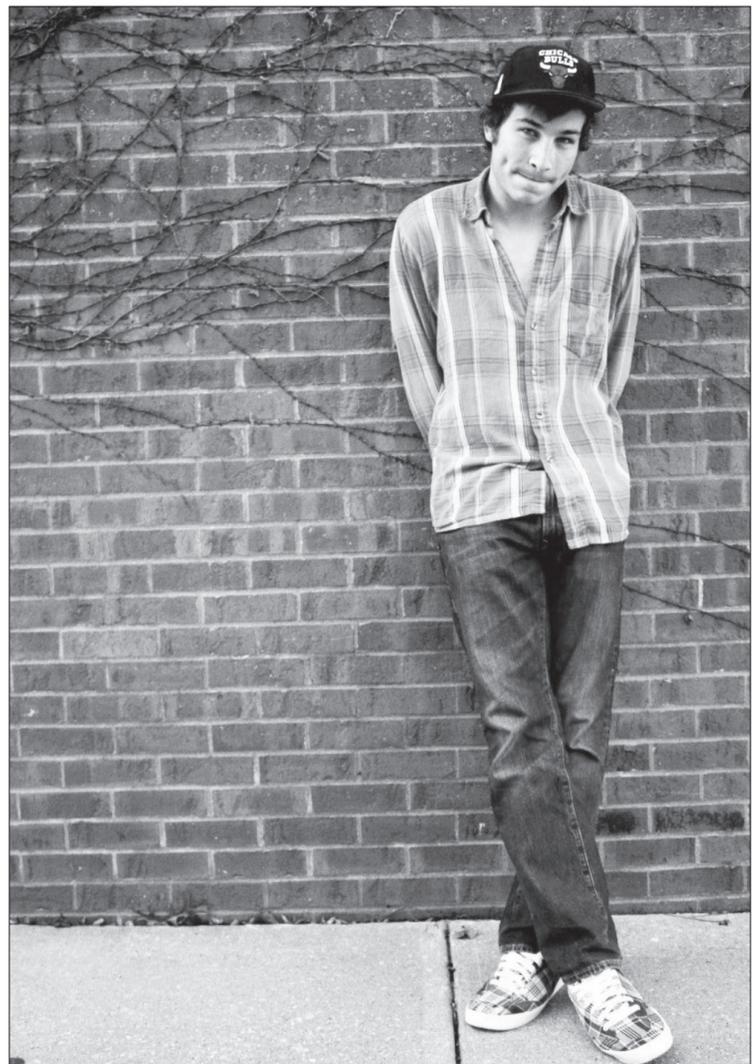
Although most of the characters auditioned for their roles, Szewczyk called in a favor from his fifth grade music teacher to fill the role of the grandmother, Mrs. Delphi.

"It was mostly out of necessity," Szewczyk said. "I was a big ham in my music class. I was in her children's theater, and I always volunteered to sing the solo in the school Christmas pageant, and so I called her up, and I was like, 'You know, Ms. Jacobs, you owe me a favor,' and she was really awesome about coming up for the filming."

After he graduates in December, Szewczyk has a job lined up to work on another movie in New York. He then hopes to attend film school to pursue a masters degree in Fine Arts. Szewczyk said he is planning on entering his film, "Leo," in a few film festivals to see how it does. He is premiering the film on campus in Violette Hall 1000 Nov. 14 at 6:30.

Senior Dwayne Riley co-stars in the film as Jeff, a horoscope obsessed grocery store manager whose ultimate dream is to end up on a game show. He auditioned for Szewczyk at Truman on the recommendation of a friend and was given the role.

"Szewczyk is one of the most driven people



Amy Gleaves/Index  
Senior Matt Szewczyk is preparing to release his first film, "Leo," about a small town butcher with big dreams.

I know," Riley said. "He was great to work with, and because he was very particular and knew exactly what he wanted, he gave us good direction on set."

Truman alumnus Michael Huey also worked with Szewczyk on the film. Szewczyk contacted Huey last spring to compose the music for the film. Music professor Jesse Krebs recommended Huey to Szewczyk because he had done music

for many of Truman's plays.

"I did a demo for him for a three-minute scene so he could see if my approach would work for what he was trying to accomplish," Huey said. "He approved it right away and only had some minor changes. I think he was so easy to work with because he was already pretty knowledgeable about film music and its function, which made things go a lot faster."

# Temporary tattoos provide comfort

BY JENNIFER LEWIS  
Staff Reporter

Truman's campus will be filled with students baring their arms to show the word love Friday. To Write Love on Her Arms Day is an event in which participants will pen the word "love" on their arms in permanent marker to demonstrate their support for those who suffer from depression, addiction and self-mutilation.

To Write Love on Her Arms is a non-profit organization formed by a group of friends in 2006, according to the organization's main Web site, [www.twloha.com](http://www.twloha.com). The program was developed as a way to help 19-year-old Florida resident Renee Yohe, who was turned away from a rehabilitation center even though she suffered from drug addiction, self-harm and suicidal tendencies.

"The center has no detox, names her too great a risk, and does not accept her," friend and founder Jamie Tworowski wrote in a letter describing Renee's story. "For the next five days, she is ours to love. We become her hospital and the possibility of healing fills our living room with life. It is unspoken and there are only a few of us, but we will be her church, the body of Christ coming alive to meet her needs, to write love on her arms."

Renee's group of friends began selling T-shirts to help fund Renee's rehabilitation and created a MySpace page to center their movement. The friends learned through their Web site that Renee wasn't the only person who needed help with these issues.

According to the organization's Web site, "In the days that followed, we learned quickly that the story we were telling represented people everywhere. We began to hear from people in need of help, and others asking what they could do to help their friends. We heard from people who had lost loved ones to suicide. Many said that these were



Photo Illustration by Mayank Dhungana/Index  
Students write 'LOVE' on their arms to show support for victims of self-harm, depression, and addiction.

questions they had never asked and parts of their story that they had never shared. Others were honest in a different way, confessing these were issues they knew little or nothing about. It seemed we had stumbled upon a bigger story, and a conversation that needed to be had."

As a result of the organization's expansion to include everyone who needs help, To Write Love on Her Arms has responded to 80,000 messages from people in 40 different countries and raised almost \$500,000 for the treatment and recovery of people like Renee in the last 2 1/2 years. All of the money TWLOHA raises goes to groups including the National Hopeline Network, Self-Abuse Finally Ends, Kids Help Line and Teen Challenge USA.

Social networking Web sites have played an important role in helping the To Write Love on Her Arms organization succeed, according to its Web site. The TWLOHA MySpace page drew the attention of popular bands such as Anberlin and Switchfoot, who were among the first bands to publicly wear TWLOHA merchandise. The organization has since spread to other sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Social-Vibe. Facebook has not only an organization page for TWLOHA, but also a common interest page, a fan page and an

event page for To Write Love on Her Arms Day. This event page was how students, including junior Kayla Jungermann and sophomore Alex Harrelson, found out about the event.

"I found out about it because it was a Facebook craze two years ago," Jungermann said. "I saw it everywhere and people kept inviting me to the event. I didn't know what it was, so I went to the site and decided it was a really good cause."

Jungermann participated two years ago and is planning on penning love on her arm again this year. She considers To Write Love on Her Arms Day an important event because it helps broadcast a meaningful message.

"It's about spreading awareness about things like depression and addiction and letting people know that there are people that care," Jungermann said. "Everyone is dealing with something, so we should really kind of think about how we interact with other people. I think everybody in their life has had a down point, and we all know what it feels like."

Harrelson said that To Write Love on Her Arms Day is significant because the act itself helps spread the message of the organization.

"Everyone should participate and write it on their arms," Harrelson said. "People ask, 'Why do you have that written on your arm?' So it gets the word around. And maybe they have friends struggling with it, and they can help their friends out more by looking it up or telling their friends about it."

Harrelson has personal experience with trying to help a friend through a very rough time, and said that the TWLOHA event can help people who feel like they are alone.

"I've had friends who have tried to commit suicide, and I called their parents and got them help," Harrelson said. "I think it's great that TWLOHA is putting out such a wide event to help people so they can understand that they are not alone in anything."

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