

# 'Roadkill: A Love Story': Local flick now on big screen



Susan Bromley  
write the author

October 10, 2012 - Brandon Culp made it to the big screen this month, along with downtown Ortonville and Brandon Township.

The 2003 Brandon High School graduate starred in and wrote the screenplay for "Roadkill: A Love Story," which was filmed locally in 2010 and for which there was a private screening at the Main Art Theater in Royal Oak on Oct. 3.

"I loved it," said Culp of finally seeing the complete film. "I see the character, not myself, which is cool. It was pretty surreal. I recognized myself, but it's like reading your own diary from when you were 22. I'm 28 now, but I wrote the screenplay when I was 22 and shot the movie when I was about to turn 26. I had an idea of what it would look like, but 70 percent of the emotion you will feel as an audience member is because of the sound and I hadn't experienced that."

Culp was joined at the theater by about 250 audience members, many of whom were from Ortonville, including village and township officials, business owners and firefighters, as well as friends and family members of the cast and crew.

In "Roadkill: A Love Story," Culp plays "Mitch," a mute car wash employee who falls in love with Taryn, a female serial killer who drives a big white pickup truck and has used it in the past to run over people. Filming locations included Fast Eddie's Car Wash in Holly, as well as Frosty Boy of Ortonville, and Papa Bella's Pizza in downtown Ortonville. Other downtown businesses can also be seen, and in late summer 2010, filming also took place on roads including Oakwood and Leece, as well as Groveland Road. Some private homes in the area were also used.

Raphael Buechel, owner of Leahpar Productions, directed the film, which has not been officially released. He plans to complete some color correction and fix some minor audio problems before submitting the movie to several film festivals over the course of the next six months.

"It's valuable to get as much feedback as possible," said Buechel, who said he filmed in Ortonville because it was a good fit for "small-town America" and because Culp wrote the script with Ortonville in mind. The cast and crew also live nearby.

Buechel said filming "Roadkill" was an enjoyable experience, particularly with the support the crew received from the village council, Brandon Township Supervisor Kathy Thurman, and in particular, Brandon Fire Department Chief Dave Kwapis and his staff.

"They were fantastic— awesome, awesome, awesome!" said Buechel. "I can't tell how the fire department helped or I will give away the storyline!"

He believes the film will eventually be rated "R" for language, but said "Roadkill" is a thriller that is unique in the sense that not everyone will like it, but "it grows on you while watching."

"There were a couple jokes at the beginning and no one laughed at the screening and I was like, 'Oh geez.' But then people realized it's funny and they're supposed to laugh. It's a love story with interesting dynamics and lots of character development."

Culp thought the response at the Royal Oak screening was positive overall.

"It's a really, really cool film and I think people will really enjoy it," said the New York City resident who is currently working on several short films, including "How to Break Up With Your Girlfriend," which premieres at the Tribeca Screening Room this week and can be found on Youtube.



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