
Butterfly Video Nets Television Award for TRF Grad Student

By Douglas Alger - Assistant Editor

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences has named a Newhouse graduate student as winner of a regional College Television Award for his video production "The Butterfly King."

Lee Larcheveque '95 beat out 22 other entrants to win the competition in the education category for college students in New York, New Jersey and Puerto Rico. He will receive a plaque and \$200 cash prize at a March 10 ceremony hosted by actress Mariette Hartley in Century City, Calif.

Loosely modeled after Disney's "The Lion King," Larcheveque's video tells the story of a caterpillar, from its start as an egg to its eventual transformation into a monarch butterfly. Along the way, the video's central character must overcome hazards ranging from predatory spiders to menacing lawn equipment.

"I wanted to bring out that of 300 eggs laid, only one or two would become a butterfly," says Larcheveque, who is currently studying television, radio and film in the Newhouse School. "It's hazardous to be a caterpillar."

It's none too easy being a video producer, either. Larcheveque spent a year working on "The Butterfly King." He had to write a script that would be interesting, educational and understandable to its target audience of five-year-olds. He had to shoot most of the video during the summer before his senior year, while the butterflies were still in season. And he had to dub the video's sound, a process he had never tried before and the results of which he is still not satisfied.

"Don't do everything yourself," he suggests to other budding producers. "It takes a lot of time. And you won't be good at everything."

Larcheveque ultimately edited seven hours' worth of raw footage down to 22 minutes. His painstaking effort is visible in the finished product. "The Butterfly King" features rare images like the hatching of a caterpillar, which he obtained by connecting his video camera to a microscope.

"It's really the butterflies that won the award for me—their fascinating life cycle," says Larcheveque, who has collected monarch butterflies since he was seven years old. "I had a lot of footage that was unique. It would be hard for people to not be captivated."

Academy members aren't the only judges to have been charmed by "The Butterfly King." Larcheveque previously won a Fuji Film Award through the Newhouse School and a David Orlin Prize through the SU Honors Program.

Making this sort of video "is something I always wanted to do," Larcheveque says. "When I was five years old, I used to get up on Saturday morning and watch Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. I wanted to be a wildlife biologist."

Larcheveque hopes this summer to begin marketing "The Butterfly King" to elementary schools, after he has re-edited its sound.

Larcheveque and other College Television Award winners were chosen by a collection of 170 academy judges—the same group that annually votes upon the Emmy awards. Some 330 students representing 138 colleges and universities from 39 states participated in the competition.



CIRCLE OF LIFE: Newhouse graduate student Lee Larcheveque's award-winning "The Butterfly King" shows the stages of a monarch butterfly's life, from its emergence from an egg through the caterpillar stage to its eventual transformation into a colorful butterfly. (images by Lee Larcheveque)

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