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Hallmark Rom-Com in Production at San Diego Christian College

(Santee, Ca) San Diego Christian College may soon be a part of your regularly scheduled programming. SDCC served as the setting this weekend for a romantic comedy film titled *Wedding Screeners*, currently in production to be slated for the Hallmark Channel. The film is being produced and directed by Alexander Films, owned by SDCC Film and Media Production Professor, Marc Hutchins.

Hutchins is a passionate independent film maker who joined the SDCC family in 2017 with the goal of sharing his industry knowledge, skills and talents with aspiring students. He formed Alexander Films in 2003 and has been producing commercials and narrative short films for over 16 years. He produced his first feature in 2008 and has produced four indie feature films, where he directed two of the four, and has worked on various films that have been distributed in various ways both domestically and internationally.

“As an assistant professor in the communication department, I get to work with students to teach the one thing I love, entertainment,” Hutchins said. “I can't imagine why everyone doesn't love the process of film-making; it's all I've ever wanted I guess you can say it's part of who I am and what I was created to do.”

Hutchins thought of the story idea for *Wedding Screeners* in 2016 while earning his Master of Fine Arts Degree at Full Sail University in Winter Park, Florida. During that time, he wrote a five-page treatment and in August of this year shared it with his writer and co-producer, Peter Wisan. Hutchins and Wisan completed the romantic comedy screenplay in under three weeks and shortly after began the process of scheduling, location scouting and casting. Shooting for the film began November 1st and will continue through November 14th throughout various locations in San Diego, with 75% of the shooting taking place in Santee.

The film is based around a widowed father whose daughters take their late mother's dying wish of finding a new wife for their father into their own hands by creating their own screening process. Through a few comical mishaps and misunderstandings, they are determined to find true love for their father and their family's happily ever after. According to Hutchins, every aspect of the film is created and designed to specifically target the Hallmark audience. His vision for family entertainment lined up with the Hallmark brand and allowed for him to privately finance the film with no need for investors.

“There is a market for Hallmark films, and as Crown Media (Hallmark's parent company) grows that brand, opportunity will grow as well,” Hutchins said. “Hallmark is a family channel that's in alignment with my company brand, where adults and children alike can enjoy entertainment together without the worry of being exposed to nudity, offensive language or graphic violence.”

This isn't the first time Hutchins has attempted to pitch a film to Crown Media. According to Hutchins, Crown Media turned down his last rom-com, deeming it "too quirky." However, the experience ended up opening the doors he needed that would help him with his current film.

"Crown Media was not wrong in turning down my last rom-com as I failed to respect their target viewing audience and produce a film that was a good fit for the Hallmark Channel," Hutchins said. "However, through that experience we built a relationship with Crown Media and were able to pitch *Wedding Screeners* last August which produced a positive response. Our hope is for a spring release, just in time for the wedding session."

Hutchins moved from Roanoke, VA to Santee, CA in the summer of 2017 to teach at SDCC. In his three years of teaching he has created six film courses from scratch, offering classes for students with a film and media concentration and for those who desire to learn more about the industry or explore a new creative outlet. He currently resides in Santee with his wife and children.

For more information, or interview requests, please contact Karla Rivera at (619) 913-8462 or via email at karla.alatorre@sdcc.edu.