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PLNU STUDENT FILM DEBUTS IN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

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Despite funding issues, broken cameras, battles with rain and losing actors at the last minute, a group of full-time college students managed to create a short film. There was sweat, there were tears and then there were months of waiting. Now, the universe has paid the creators back in kind.

I Have to Kill My Professor tells the story of a student who, in fear of failing out of college, launches an anxiety-filled scheme to kill his professor. The film was directed by Jonathan Pickett, a PLNU alumni and filmmaker.

“Maybe we’ve all tossed that idea around in our minds,” said Nicholas Macedo, a senior media communications major and the cinematographer for Pickett’s production team. “I would call it dark humor. When I tell people the movie is about a kid killing his professor, they go ‘Yikes!’ but I’m like, ‘No, but you’ll laugh.’”

The project took eight months to complete and had its first showcasing at PLNU’s Glammy Awards last spring. Both Pickett and Macedo said it was the hardest production either of them have worked on. Initially, many rejection emails were received in response to the team’s numerous applications, but one particular festival responded with the best news the crew could’ve hoped for.

“Pickett calls me and is just panting,” said Macedo. “He tells me, ‘We got accepted into the San Diego International Film Festival,’ and I just start running around my room. I was just mind-blown.”

Pickett added, “It definitely feels like we’ve come full circle. It’s gratifying to see that the team, who put in months of unpaid labor and credit-free work, can all walk on the red carpet together.”

This year’s San Diego International Film Festival will feature a special honoring of Patrick Stewart and the opening night film, *Marshall*, stars Josh Gad, Chadwick Boseman, Kate Hudson and Dan Stevens. At this festival, students and A-list actors collide.

“We are in the student film section, but the reality is that by being in the festival at all, we are getting the same VIP filmmaker pass that the other people are getting,” said Macedo. “And we get to brush shoulders with them.”

To Pickett and the crew, this acceptance meant the world, not only as a major networking opportunity, but also as chance to share *I Have to Kill My Professor* with friends and family who helped make the project possible.

“The crew can come, the extras can come and the people who donated their free time can come,” said Pickett. “That means everything. I would rather get into the San Diego Film Festival than some of the other really big festivals just because it means bringing it home to our own backyard.”

Analise Nelson, a junior media communications major and one of the film’s producers, added, “It’s not so much about the bragging rights. I’m most looking forward to watching the film with people that I love.”

It’s a sacred experience for the team to have the opportunity to be present and in the theater when family, as well as perfect strangers, watch the film for the first time. Pickett describes it as an almost religious affair.

“There’s something to be said about watching what you made with an audience and seeing them laugh where you didn’t know they’d laugh,” said Pickett. “That energy... It’s a holy experience.”

I Have to Kill My Professor will showcase at the Horton Regal in the Horton Plaza, October 7.

Tickets can be purchased online. Use Coupon Code [student15] for 15% off purchase.