

Film Review: ‘The War Room’ Examines Faith

Story of marriage in crisis may be too heavy-handed for mainstream audiences



Pastor Alex Kendrick as Coleman Young and Karen Abercrombie as Miss Clara in ‘The War Room’

By Kam Williams
Special to *The Skanner News*

In 2011, Pastor Alex Kendrick produced, directed, wrote and starred in *Courageous*, a very compelling, action-oriented, faith-based drama. With *War Room*, he’s opted to play only a supporting role in the flick, thereby freeing himself to focus more on his duties behind the camera.

physically unavailable to his wife and their young daughter, Danielle (Alena Pitts). And that’s just the tip of the iceberg, since terribly-flawed Tony proceeds to put both his job and marriage in jeopardy by embezzling funds from his company and dating a colleague when he’s away on business. Nevertheless, the lout should thank his lucky stars that instead of leaving him, realtor Liz heeds the advice of Miss Clara (Karen

up with a “battle plan” to resurrect the relationship, which helps explain the picture’s militaristic-sounding title.

In this critic’s opinion, *War Room* is a movie that’s way too heavy-handed in its treatment of the material to find much of a mainstream following. That’s too bad, since the modern morality play could’ve just as effectively delivered its valuable message without wearing religion on its sleeve.

Consequently, its appeal is apt to be pretty much limited to Evangelicals with an appetite for incessant sermonizing.

This represents an unfortunate step backwards for Pastor Kendrick who had previously demonstrated an uncanny ability to serve up Jesus fare ever so subtly.

A prayer-ordained, Prodigal husband parable preaching primarily to the choir!

Good ★★
Rated PG for mature themes
Running time: 120 minutes
Studio: Provident Films
Distributor: TriStar Pictures

They come up with a ‘battle plan’ to resurrect the relationship, which helps explain the picture’s militaristic-sounding title

The film revolves around protagonists Elizabeth (Priscilla Shirer) and Tony Jordan (T.C. Stallings), a couple we meet already in the midst of a relationship crisis. Most of their marital woes are of the husband’s making, as he is a workaholic who’s emotionally and

Abercrombie), a sage, elderly client of hers.

Clara is a Christian who believes in the power of prayer. Furthermore, she suggests that Liz ought to love and respect rather than try to fix her philandering hubby. Together, they come

Interview: Beauchamp Keeps Emmett Till Alive

Award-winning filmmaker discusses Kickstarter campaign for Emmett Till biopic

By Kam Williams
Special to *The Skanner News*

Producer Keith Beauchamp is no stranger to Emmett Till. It was his Emmy-nominated film, *The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till*, that prompted the U.S. Justice Department, to reopen the case in 2004. Since his production of *Untold*, Keith has worked closely with FBI and their Civil Rights Cold Case Initiative, producing documentaries on other unsolved civil rights murders in his capacity as Executive Producer and Host of Investigation Discovery’s (ID) crime reality series, “The Injustice Files.”

Originally a Criminal Justice major at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Keith left school to pursue justice for Emmett Till. He remains the only filmmaker to work closely with the Till family and is dedicated to sharing their heartbreak and their mission to advocate for change.

Now, he has launched a Kickstarter in support of Till, a feature-length drama he’s making about the life of Emmett Till. “After dedicating two decades of my life seeking justice for Emmett Louis Till,” Keith explains, “I’m truly excited and moved to finally bring his true story to the world.”

“Here is a story that is as much a part of American history as the Boston Tea Party and may stand as the greatest argument for getting rid of sanctioned racism,” adds Producer Whoopi Goldberg. “Emmett Till’s brutal death at the hands of ignorant, brutish people exposes the Jim Crow-era South that gave the implicit okay to uphold that kind of racism without any real fear of repercussions. Today, the return of rampant, unchallenged racism cries out for the telling of Emmett Till’s story again.”

KW: What interested you in making a drama about Emmett Till, since you already did a documentary about him?

KB: My life/career has come full circle. I’ve always wanted to produce a feature on the Till case. In fact, that’s how my journey as a filmmaker started. The documentary, *The Untold Story of*



Producer Keith Beauchamp is crowdfunding a film about the life and death of Emmett Till

Emmett Louis Till, was my second vehicle to get the true story of Emmett Till out to the public. After gathering research, in 1998 I wrote a screenplay that was later optioned off by producers who had a deal with Showtime. Not knowing much about the industry, I felt that I gave my baby away because of the option period and the lack of interest in a Till film. The option eventually expired, but during that process I continued to travel to Mississippi and around the country gathering information on the case. After I discovered vital information that I felt could be critical in the reopening of the case, I decided and was encouraged by Mother Mobley to pursue the documentary so we could use it as a stepping-stone to get the case reopened.

After Mother Mobley’s passing and before the documentary was finally released in theaters in 2005, the 50th anniversary of Emmett’s murder, I was already, be-

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