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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**From AP English Project to Indie Comedy Sensation: *TEACHER OF THE YEAR,* starring *Key & Peele's* Keegan-Michael Key, is Now Available on iTunes**

While the major film studios and power players descended on Cannes these last few weeks, a small film with big dreams premiered in the United States. *Teacher of the Year,* starring *Key & Peele’s* Keegan Michael Key, began as a film project in writer/director Jason Strouse’s AP English class, and is now climbing the iTunes movie charts after a successful theatrical run.

The making of *Teacher of the Year* began with a conversation between Strouse and his principal. “She was complaining about the school’s work-study program, that the kids got jobs at prestigious companies, but all they got to do was get coffee and make copies,” Strouse explained. “And I said, ‘Well, I want to make a movie. Let me use the school, and I’ll give them real jobs.’” The students’ presence on the set was integral to its success. “They were so enthusiastic," said Strouse, "and their excitement really rubbed off on the actors and the crew.” True to his word, Strouse did make sure the students filled important roles on the cast and crew. “When I told my cinematographer that his assistant cameraman was in high school, he went berserk,” Strouse says. “He was telling me he wouldn’t let the kid do anything. But this wasn't just any kid. His name is Arno Ekmekji and he’s one of the smartest students I’ve ever been around. By the end of the shoot, he was letting Arno shoot footage, and then he hired him as an intern after we wrapped.” The students also helped Strouse attract his top-quality cast. “Most of these guys are comics I’ve known for years, but they were also really excited about working with the kids. I told Keegan what I was up to and he said, ‘You know, I don’t want to miss that.’ He rescheduled the writing of ‘Key & Peele’ so he could be part of it. I’ll always be grateful to him for that.”

The film is a satirical yet sincere look at the current state of the American education system. Set amidst the eccentric faculty of Truman High School who work under the supervision of an incompetent principal (Key), Mitch Carter (*Boardwalk Empire’s* Matt Letscher) wins the California Teacher of the Year award and immediately receives a tempting offer that may force him to leave his job. An audience favorite on the festival circuit last year, it garnered numerous Best Picture awards, a Best Screenplay prize for Strouse at the Newport Beach Film Festival, and a Best Actor nod for Key at the Chicago Comedy Film Festival.

Screen Media Films acquired the rights to *Teacher of the Year* earlier this year, which led to a theatrical release and now its success on iTunes. "*Teacher of the Year* is an entertaining, funny film with a warm heart and a serious message. We’re honored to bring it to the marketplace,” said Screen Media’s Director of Acquisitions Seth Needle. Added Strouse, “I’m very happy the film is in the hands of Screen Media, a company that really gets what we were trying to accomplish. I wanted to make a funny film, and I think I did, but I also wanted to discuss the issue of teacher compensation. That so many of our best educators leave the profession because they can’t make enough money is a terrible problem in this country.”

*Teacher of the Year* is now available for download on iTunes (and most cable On Demand platforms), where it continues to climb the Most Popular charts. “That the film is finding a wide audience is very gratifying for all of us. It’s become a personal project not just for me, but for the entire cast and crew. I’m glad people are enjoying it so much.”