

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Christians Excited Over War Room's Arrival At Local Cinema

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ST. CROIX -- War Room was released over a month ago (August 28) in the U.S., but the film has yet to make its appearance at local cinemas, leaving Christians eager to experience the phenomenon deflated. Yet, as hope for its arrival here was beginning to fade, Caribbean Cinemas, the corporate owner of the local theater located in Sunny Isle, announced that it would begin showing on Thursday.

The Consortium spoke briefly with Franklin Weathered, assistant manager at the theater, who revealed that strong demand from local people of faith prompted the owners to schedule dates for War Room's showing.

"There were a lot of people who were interested in it, particularly religious people from the church," Mr. Weathered said. "We hope to make these movies available to the public sooner in the future."

The film is a low-budget family drama with a faith-based message. Its success surprised even its most ardent supporters by topping big budget releases like *Straight Out Compton* at the box office over the Labor Day weekend.

"We thought we had a shot at the top five but didn't expect to be near the top," Alex Kendrick, *War Room*'s director told [The Wrap](#). "The response has been incredible! We've been overwhelmed with people who were inspired and moved by the film."

Regarding the title of the film, Kendrick says, "We called it 'War Room' because, like the military, we should seek God for the right strategy before going into combat. By combat, I mean daily issues we face in our culture."

But the movie received poor reviews from critics, with the film currently holding a 26/100 percent average on aggregate reviews site [Metacritic](#).

So how then, did a low-budget, poorly-reviewed film become so successful?

According to [The Washington Post](#), behind the film's popularity was a deepening partnership between the filmmakers and a network of influential pastors, which delivered millions of viewers without the need for Hollywood's typical promotion vehicles of expensive TV ads and global media tours.

Those religious leaders were given rough cuts — overall, about five drafts of the movie — and each time offered feedback and edits to the film's writing duo, brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick. In turn, the ministers — from tiny churches in rural North Carolina as well as large faith organizations such as the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Family Life and the Southern Baptist Convention — began pushing the film on social media and in their Sunday sermons, many of which are broadcast widely on the radio and in podcasts, *The Washington Post* wrote.

Yet, even after its breakout success in the U.S., the film will make its first showing here a month later. Mr. Weathered told *The Consortium* that local management makes recommendations to Caribbean Cinemas corporate offices in Puerto Rico and leave the decision-making to them.

"Normally it depends on interest in a film," he said. "Once there's interest, we pass the information on to corporate and they take it from there."

War Room will show from Monday to Friday at 6:35 p.m. and 9:15 p.m. On the weekends (Saturday and Sunday), it shows at 3:55 p.m., 6:35 p.m. and 9:15 p.m.

[Watch the original video](#)