

"Moving McAllister"

BYU grad writes his way into a job

Utah independent filmmakers: Ben Gourley

By Sean P. Means
The Salt Lake Tribune

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2007 12:40:41 PM MDT

When Ben Gourley graduated from Brigham Young University with the goal of making movies, "no studios were giving me executive jobs."

"There was really a point where I knew that if I didn't do it, nobody was going to hand it to me," Gourley said.

Gourley, who acted in such Mormon Cinema films as "Saints and Soldiers" and the LDS-themed "Pride and Prejudice," started writing his own script, inspired by a disastrous experience moving his mom from Salt Lake City to Logan.

That script became "Moving McAllister," a romantic comedy about Rick (played by Gourley), a legal intern and suck-up for a high-powered Miami lawyer (Rutger Hauer) who agrees to drive a rental truck - and the boss' free-spirited niece (played by "That '70s Show's" Mila Kunis) - to Los Angeles.

Gourley spent two months writing a first draft of the script and tinkered with it through pre-production and production. "You're never really done until you shoot it," he said.

Gourley could have gone the studio route with his script, but "I didn't know how that would be done - they don't teach you that kind of stuff in the film school I went to." Making the film independently, Gourley said, meant "the control was more in my court."

Gourley employed a few Utah connections. He recommended Andrew Black, who directed "Pride and Prejudice," in which Gourley played the Mr. Bingley character. And he wrote a part of a hippie hitchhiker for one of his BYU classmates, a then-unknown Jon Heder - and Heder, staying true to his word, worked on the movie even after "Napoleon Dynamite" propelled him to Hollywood's A-list. "He manned up - he did this thing as a friend," Gourley said of his classmate.

The movie was shot in 2005 in Salt Lake City, Provo and southern Utah, with a smaller crew traveling across the South getting shots of the broken-down rental truck. "The truck wasn't very well," Gourley said. "It kept blowing out engines. We put four different engines in that truck. Halfway home, we had driven 600 miles at about 20 miles an hour. . . . Finally we just put it on the back of a flatbed and took it home."

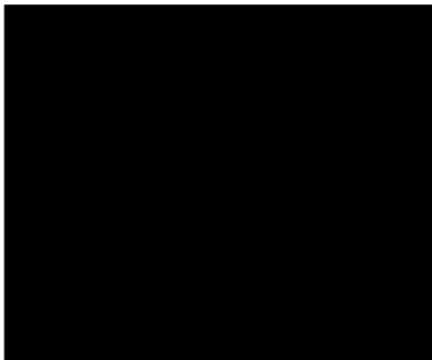
"Moving McAllister" has a distributor, First Independent Pictures, which will run a test release in three markets - Los Angeles, Minneapolis and Salt Lake City - on Sept. 14. Its performance in those cities will help determine the marketing strategy for the rest of the country.

Click photo to enlarge



Mila Kunis and Ben Gourley in "Moving McAllister," a romantic comedy written by Gourley.

Advertisement



"We don't have \$30 million to market," Gourley said. That's why the movie is relying on a grassroots online publicity campaign, getting people on community sites such as MySpace and Facebook to download the trailer and tell their friends.

"We only have a few more weeks to really get into people's minds that the film is good," Gourley said. "We're really hitting it hard, and hopefully we'll get the people in the seats."

[Return to Top](#)

RECENT COMMENTS:

9/2/2007 1:56:00 PM -- I can't wait to see this! I had the opportunity to be an extra and Ben and Mila are very personable. Good luck! [\[MORE\]](#)

[READ ALL 1 COMMENTS](#) | [POST A COMMENT](#) | [REGISTER](#) | [TRIBTALK.COM](#)

Was this article worthwhile?



+5

5 VOTES