

September 10, 2011

Recommendation for Jeff Topf

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently had the great pleasure of working with Jeff Topf on an independent short film called *No Swimming*, which I wrote and directed.

In this film, Jeff was cast as the “Lawyer”—a character so catatonically bored, he could hardly even move, and so insensitive, he would rather stare at a soap opera on television than look in the eyes of his horrifically injured client. On top of that, the entire film was made in an extremely deadpan mode—so a very limited, restrained performance style was imposed on the entire cast.

Not only did Jeff embrace these parameters, picking them up incredibly quickly, he also somehow still managed to bring a range of nuance, subtlety, and, yes, even charisma to this seemingly unlikeable character. Jeff is absolutely hilarious in his role as the Lawyer, but also makes the audience understand that he is not just a bad lawyer, but a cog in a much larger machine, emblematic of bigger things going on in the legal system and its attitudes towards women. Yes, all of that in one scene! And I really give credit to Jeff—definitely not the script!—for getting it across in his performance.

Jeff was a delight to work with from start to finish. He took direction beautifully, with the ability to modulate his character and line delivery in the most finely-drawn ways. I only wish that there had been some room for improvisation in the script, because I’m sure Jeff would have been great with this too. His professionalism, positivity, and laid-back attitude also made him a real pleasure for everyone to be around, both at rehearsals and on set.

I am happy to give Jeff the highest possible recommendation. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,
Lana Wilson

Writer/Director, *No Swimming*
lanawilson@gmail.com