



BLUE YONDER FILMS PRESENTS
A TODD EDWARDS FILM

JEFFIE WAS HERE



“JEFFIE WAS HERE” BUILT TO LAUGH

HOODWINKED co-creator and co-director Todd Edwards and his “Jeffie Was Here” producing team discuss the jump from animation to live-action, wearing multiple hats, and the industry’s shift to branded projects

From a shoebox New York City apartment, to diners, desert freeways, and the Malibu coast, the diverse palette of “Jeffie Was Here”, writer/director Todd Edwards’ follow-up to the 150 million grossing sleeper hit “Hoodwinked”, hardly betrays its indie budget.

Edwards’ film tells the story of a couple at a low-point in their relationship who must travel to a family funeral but can only afford the drive by offering a seat to a paying third passenger: the vexing Jeffie. They need him, and he needs them, and this bizarre symbiotic relationship that initially appears to be random begins to unfold as part of a larger scheme.

“We approached ‘Jeffie’ with a tool set that was honed on ‘Hoodwinked’ and subsequent projects” said Edwards. “Making a successful CG animated comedy for less than a tenth of the cost of the studios forces you to think strategically about what is absolutely necessary to engage your audience. For ‘Hoodwinked’ it was creating a mainstream, commercial comedy with fun and unique characters set within an achievable artistic vision.”

With “Jeffie Was Here” they applied the same equation, using their professional perspectives and experience to squeeze out of a shoestring budget a film that eclipses the low-budget “indie standard”. “We created this project with really unique characters who deserved to live, so instead of getting them lost in a developmental limbo, we decided what it would cost and

moved forward with the support of enthusiastic investors” said Edwards.

Edwards’ directorial acumen has been years in the making, having debuted his first feature “Chillicothe” at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival only a few years out of college. Since then, Edwards co-wrote and co-directed “Hoodwinked”, starring the likes of Glenn Close, Ann Hathaway and Patrick Warburton. Distributed by The Weinstein Company, “Hoodwinked” is to this day one of the Weinstein’s most commercially successful projects since leaving Miramax, with its sequel due out



Left to right, producer Timothy Hooten, writer/ director Todd Edwards (in wardrobe), and producer Katie Hooten, on set in Lancaster, CA.

later this year.

After the success of “Hoodwinked”, Edwards and his partners at Blue Yonder Films set up several projects, sold a few scripts, but eventually grew tired of what felt like a terminal state of project development.

In the summer of 2008, Edwards and his producing partners Katie Hooten and Timothy Hooten decided it was time to proceed with “Jeffie Was Here” while continuing the pursuit of studio projects.

“We had been in development mode so long, and had grown tired of the atmosphere of trepidation that has the studios gravitating more and more to

branded projects, so it was a breath of fresh air to raise our own resources and get back to the creative problem-solving required to slay the beast of indie film production” said Katie Hooten.

And this production was a beast indeed. Ambitious even by indie standards, “Jeffie Was Here” was shot in twenty-five days with nearly fifty locations and a skeleton crew.

“We needed to capture a variety of environments that would play well as locations on a cross-country trip, including a forest and desert, both of which offered an onslaught of heat and high winds and could have meant the gallows for our budget and timeline,” said producer Timothy Hooten. Despite this, the Blue Yonder team stayed on budget and on schedule.

“The film was conceived with ease-of-production in mind, yet our relentless pursuit of the creative unconventional from story to execution meant that Todd, Katie and I would be serving in multiple capacities simultaneously if we were to meet our goals,” said Timothy.

Edwards added, “Between the three of us, there’s hardly a production job that we haven’t done, so our diverse range of experiences from art direction to set construction were a necessity everyday.” Edwards continued, “As producer, Katie was constantly shifting back and forth from our mobile production office to the set, while Tim, as both producer and assistant director, was even burning the midnight oil to keep the picture car running.”

Beyond helming, Edwards also donned more than his share of hats, including co-writing, starring as the title character, editing and scoring the picture.

“My vision for ‘Jeffie Was Here’ was very specific” explained Edwards. “The story, the look, the pace, and the score evolved to be a cohesive unit in my mind, so the different hats I wore were both a necessity and a welcomed creative release.” Edwards also wrote most of the

songs for the “Hoodwinked” soundtrack, but this is the first project he has scored.

“Todd is a skilled artist in several mediums,” said Katie. “He brings his artist’s eye in composing his shots. He is gifted in pre-visualizing exactly how he plans to tell his stories. Even so, I was impressed by his flexibility on set. There was usually a point mid-day that would require a director and producers pow-wow to modify the shot schedule. Todd is especially adept at creating ways to maintain his vision while adapting to the challenges of the day.”

If a goal for Edwards and the Blue Yonder team was to throw people off the low-budget scent, they’ve done it. Few indie films boast a full-scale mix from Skywalker Sound, which adds a very tangible layer of polish to the production. The writing, set pieces, performances, and score of “Jeffie Was Here” also up the ante.

“It is great to be at the point of sharing ‘Jeffie’, especially with the many timely themes of the project” said Edwards. “The setting is the real world, the structure is a road movie, but the placement of an eccentric, scheming, activist as a passenger in a financially struggling young couple’s car for a coast-to-coast trip provides a lot of opportunity for comedy.”

Blue Yonder Films has begun the roll-out of “Jeffie Was Here”, showcasing the film at various national and international festivals as they seek a distribution partner. The film stars Peter Bedgood, Alexis Raben, Todd Edwards, Cristine Rose and Ken Marino. Written by Todd Edwards and Peter Bedgood. Directed by Todd Edwards.

Action, with a side of yellow Crocs

“Jeffie Was Here” Writer/Director Todd Edwards vamps on assembling an indie cast, his color-palette inspiration, and those once-ubiquitous rubbery clogs

After “Hoodwinked” there was a lot of opportunity for me to stay in family animation, but while I have written or am developing other animation projects, I never intended on getting pigeon-holed in that genre. There’s so much more we want to do as a company, as writers, and as actors, and we’ve been developing many projects of different sizes over the years that were good candidates for our ‘next thing.’ Ultimately, we decided to develop a live-action film that could be funded quickly and shot on a tight schedule in between our other projects, so “Jeffie Was Here” was born.

At the heart of “Jeffie Was Here” lie two very different relationships: a rifting romance between Alan and Amanda, and a comedic sparring match between Alan and Jeffie. I wanted to develop a simple story with a lot of moving parts inside of it. The idea was to create a situation around a trio of characters and have fun watching the shifting dynamics within the structure of a road movie. There was a welcomed challenge in keeping it fresh and avoiding what we perceived as the genre’s pitfalls. Good characters were the number one priority in achieving that goal.

Co-writer Peter Bedgood and I had written several scripts together over the years, but had never written anything where we could play such distinct characters as Alan and Jeffie in the context of a feature. The last time Peter and I acted together in a feature was my 1999 debut “Chillicothe,” and our characters were sort of caricatures of ourselves as we were in the late 90’s. A decade later there was a very strong desire to show our range in a different way, and show where our heads were as writers. In life I’m kind of steady and focused, so it was fun to flip the switch and become the polar opposite: Jeffie is outspoken, rude, and completely uninhibited. Vanity went out the window on this one; I had to be big, bald and beardy, and dress like a hand-me-down. On the other hand, Peter tends to be the free spirit in our duo, but through all the commercials and short work he’s done, I knew he would be very good at dialing in a character as rigid as Alan. Watching Peter blow a gasket in this film is a real joy!

For the third member of the story’s trio, the producers and I had to go on the hunt. I literally looked at about two thousand LA actresses. Amanda needed to be a lot of things to make the movie work. She’s the glue; attractive yet accessible, undyingly supportive in her relationship but not a doormat, and a “straight man” who can play the butt of a joke when required. It was a tall order but we found everything we were looking for in Alexis Raben, an extremely gifted actor whose career will be an exciting one to watch.

For Mrs. Mangold, producers Katie, Timothy and I were thrilled to cast Cristine Rose. I had watched the first season of 'Heroes' and even though it's not typically comedic, I had a strong sense that Cristine would be more than capable of taking on such a loony matriarch without veering too far into the cartoonish. She did not disappoint. Miraculously we were able to cram her entire performance into a single day of shooting. It's about ten solid minutes of screen time, so it was quite a feat!

Similarly, we felt very fortunate to rope in our old friend Ken Marino who had also lent a voice to "Hoodwinked." Ken is so busy between his starring role on Showtime's "Party Down" and his work as a successful screenwriter, penning such films as 2008's "Role Models," which he co-wrote with Paul Rudd. It's a different kind of role than he typically plays; Ken is often cast as the jerk or moron and does it masterfully, but Roger is much more of a normal, well-adjusted guy. Ken's like that in life, and I wanted to see him that way on screen for once. It was fun to watch it happen. The guy's a natural.

In the indie spirit, the art department basically consisted of me, producer Timothy Hooten, associate producer Josh D'Ellia (who also handled location sound), and college student Jason Burkeholder. Anyone who hasn't worked on a film production might not appreciate how insane this idea is. With everyone wearing so many hats, we had to be very careful not to let tasks fall through the cracks. A lot of work was handled in pre-production, but not all of it. There were a lot of late nights.

Since we were sort of piece-mealing the art direction together, I had to map out a very clear color palette for everyone to follow. Though it's been done by other filmmakers, I couldn't think of a better inspiration for the color palette than the Wizard of Oz. I tried to push that concept as far as I could without it getting too obvious. Together, Alan and Amanda are like the collective Dorothy: passive blues and checkers. If you'll notice, Alan is even wearing red shoes. They're swept up in this adventure that takes them far from home. Jeffie is Oz, so green is his dominant color for the majority of the film, but there's also pink, gold and yellow in his wardrobe. He wears yellow Crocs, which to me is a tip of the hat to the yellow brick road.

As a metaphor for the transformation that the journey motivates in our characters, I liked the idea of the movie starting very small and opening up gradually. We start in the tiniest east coast apartment imaginable, and end at the biggest place on earth: the Pacific Ocean. The apartment was such a squeeze that we had to build it as a 360 degree set with removable walls in order to achieve the needed shots. It was careful choreography. We reveal a small desk is at the end of the small bed. He stands up from the desk and we realize he's been sitting on the toilet. He folds up the bed and we realize it's their shower. Hopefully the visual transition to the larger landscapes like the forest, desert and ocean will give a strong feeling for the audience about the journey these characters are taking and their evolving outlook.

Jeffie Was Here



Logline

Alan and Amanda have hit plenty of bumps in their relationship, but nothing could have prepared them for the cross-country trip they must share with a nut-job named Jeffie. This “inconvenient dude” provides nonstop hijinks, pushing the couple to the brink... and by journey’s end no one is left unchanged.

Synopsis

It's been a rough couple of years for Alan Mangold, a tightly-wound professor in his 30's who dreams of a better life beyond his shoebox apartment... if only he could complete his opus, "Orphan Bastard." When his Nana dies, Alan and his better-half Amanda, who has her own unrealized aspirations, must post an internet ad at the university to find a student who will share the costs of the emergency cross-country trip. Enter Jeffie: an inflammatory individual who fancies himself a scholar, a poet, and the embodiment of enlightened living. At first, the couple's travel companion seems to have responded randomly to their ad, but as the trip progresses, it becomes clear that Jeffie's presence relates to a web of tightly-held secrets between Alan and Amanda. Amidst infidelity, blackmail, run-ins with the law, and a painfully bad demo tape, the ride with Jeffie is unpredictable at every turn and by journey's end no one is left unchanged.

JEFFIE WAS HERE

An Inconvenient Dude.



BLUE YONDER FILMS PRESENTS A TODD EDWARDS FILM "JEFFIE WAS HERE" PETER BEDGOOD ALEXIS RABEN TODD EDWARDS
CRISTINE ROSE AND KEN MARINO ALSO FEATURING VANESSA RAGLAND STEVE LITTLE KEITH BURKE COOPER THORNTON
ORIGINAL SCORE BY TODD EDWARDS ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS TYE EDWARDS JOSH D'ELIA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JEFF McCUTCHEON
PRODUCED BY KATIE HOOTEN AND TIMOTHY HOOTEN
STORY BY TODD EDWARDS SCREENPLAY BY TODD EDWARDS AND PETER BEDGOOD DIRECTED BY TODD EDWARDS



PETER BEDGOOD

(ALAN) co-wrote "JEFFIE WAS HERE" and has co-written many other projects with director Todd Edwards. Peter co-starred in the 1999 Edwards-helmed "Chillicothe."



ALEXIS RABEN

(AMANDA) co-starred with Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig in the Warner Bros. 2007 release "The Invasion"; also starring in 2009's "Miss March."



TODD EDWARDS

(JEFFIE), director and co-writer of "JEFFIE WAS HERE," he co-directed the animated hit "Hoodwinked" starring Anne Hathaway and Glenn Close. He wrote, directed and starred in the 1999 Sundance feature "Chillicothe."



CRISTINE ROSE

(MRS. MANGOLD) has numerous film and television credits, but is best known for playing Angela Perelli on NBC's popular show "Heroes."



KEN MARINO

(ROGER) is known for his work on the infamous MTV sketch show "The State." He most recently stars on Showtime's "Party Down" and he co-wrote the 2008 hit "Role Models" with Paul Rudd.



VANESSA RAGLAND

(CHASTITY) is the creator and star of the popular web series "Small Dreams." She wrote and starred in the short film "Banditos" and has appeared on NBC's "The Office."



STEVE LITTLE

(RUNNING WATERS) appeared in "Balls of Fury" and plays the beloved character "Stevie" on the HBO/Will Ferrell-produced series "Eastbound & Down."



KEITH BURKE

(HIGHWAY PATROLMAN) has appeared on "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," "Criminal Minds," and "Southland."



COOPER THORNTON

(MINISTER THOMPKINS) plays Dr. Harris on NBC's "Parks and Recreation" and has appeared on "My Name Is Earl" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm."



**FROM THE CO-CREATOR OF THE ANIMATED HIT
"HOODWINKED" COMES A COMEDY FOR GROWN-UPS**

**"Very creative"
"Ingeniously daffy"
"Oddball humor that comes out
of left field and hits a homerun
with its audience" ~Ray Schillaci**

**JEFFIE
WAS
HERE**

An inconvenient dude.

Review by Ray Schillaci, FRED Entertainment

2010 PHOENIX FILM FESTIVAL...Most independent brethren met with enthusiastic audiences and the hopes of getting...seen in other markets. In my humble opinion; two stand outs delivered the goods with enjoyable performances and engaging stories that were executed in a very creative way. These films might not have won the accolades at the festival, but they certainly provided big laughs and a good time for all. Todd Berger's "The Scenesters" takes a comic jab at "reality" shoots that is usually reserved for horror and succeeds tremendously while the co-creative team of "Hoodwinked" presented their brand of off-the-wall humor and applied it to a very funny road trip with **"Jeffie Was Here"**. Both films have the luck of an extremely talented cast and crew, but "Jeffie..." has a slight edge with a brilliantly comic timed performance by Peter Bedgood.

In "Jeffie Was Here" Bedgood plays Alan who has his hands full with a thankless low-paying professor job, an over-sexed teacher's assistant, a long-suffering girlfriend, unrelenting writer's block and a pending road trip that needs funding. Enter Jeffie, the last person one would ask to share the ride with. He's part wannabe musician, guru, tree-hugger and general pest. But Alan has his reasons for accepting his application and the results are priceless. Bedgood brings a fine mix of frustration/sorrow/regret and hilarity that has not been seen since the early days of Jack Lemmon. There have been comparisons to Tom Hanks, but I believe Peter Bedgood as Alan gives a far more sympathetic/pathetic performance than he's been credited for. Also, Bedgood's chemistry works amazingly well with the other performers. He could have been the center of attention, but instead he plays with his fellow thespians so well that nearly everyone's performance shines brighter.

Of course, the performances have to also be credited to the talents of director Todd Edwards who does double duty as Jeffie. Edwards's direction at times is ingeniously daffy. From Alan's living quarters to a tough man contest at a child's birthday party in the barrio, it's oddball humor that comes out of left field and hits a homerun with its audience. "Jeffie..." is not a throw-it-all-on-the-wall comedy and see what sticks. It's a well calculated mature piece that has some adults acting like the children they have inside of them. I also have to mention Edwards's very capable soundtrack that had me humming long after the movie was over.

Aside from Peter Bedgood other notables are Alexis Rabin as Amanda in a wonderful heartfelt performance and an all too brief comic burst from Vanessa Ragland. Ragland's eccentric Chastity (the teacher's assistant) reminds one of a young Shirley MacLaine with a touch of Sandra Bernhard. She manages to be abrasive and engaging all at once. Speaking of abrasive, Cristine Rose (NBC's *Heroes*) delivers a wonderful comic turn as Alan's mother.

Then there is the character of the title, Jeffie. Director, Todd Edwards plays him with glee; annoying, scheming with a dash of bizarre innocence that keeps us guessing what is next on his agenda or does he even have one. If I had one criticism it would be the lack of an edge on the character of Jeffie's part. If there was the slightest bit of danger that he exuded, the film could have set it itself up as a classic. After all, Jeffie holds all the cards. But perhaps the filmmakers did not want to take that chance with the possibility of alienating some of their audience. As it stands; "Jeffie..." has mass appeal.

"Jeffie Was Here" provides unusual situations with laughs and a thought-provoking, satisfying ending that hearkens back to the comedies of the 70s and early 80s. At that time writers/directors like Paul Mazursky and Paul Bartel were not just looking for basic toilet humor, they demanded the audience to think as well as laugh. Writers Todd Edwards and Peter Bedgood accomplish that right mix of pathos and fun delivering a road trip that one looks forward to taking again. <http://www.asitecalledfred.com/2010/04/23/toy-story-3-trailer-park/>

JEFFIE WAS HERE written, directed and scored by Todd Edwards,
produced by Katie Hooten and Timothy Hooten. Starring Peter Bedgood,
Alexis Raben, Todd Edwards, Cristine Rose, and Ken Marino
trailer: www.jeffiewashere.com

ABOUT BLUE YONDER FILMS

With great fanfare, BLUE YONDER FILMS' animated hit *Hoodwinked* vaulted to \$150 million worldwide, catching studios and audiences by surprise with its fresh take on the classic tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" and making history as the first CG animated feature to be independently produced with a wide theatrical release. The Blue Yonder team was vital to every step of *Hoodwinked*, including writing, producing, directing, casting, editing, character and set design, and song-writing. Released in December 2005 by The Weinstein Company, the low-budget hit stars Anne Hathaway, Glenn Close, James Belushi, Patrick Warburton, Andy Dick, and Anthony Anderson. Since *Hoodwinked*, Blue Yonder has forged ahead on many other animation projects, including the upcoming *Hoodwinked II*, also contributing significantly on *Arthur and the Invisibles* and *TMNT*. Blue Yonder is also producing the animated feature *Escape From Planet Earth*, with the animated feature *Dragons*, co-written by Todd Edwards and Peter Bedgood, to follow soon after, both under The Weinstein Co. banner. Prior to *Hoodwinked*, Blue Yonder independently financed, produced, and secured distribution for the live-action feature *Chillicothe*, which was written and directed by Todd Edwards and premiered at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival. FOR MORE: www.blueyonderfilms.com



Here is the American film NUVO recommends you see during the Indy Film Fest...

IFFF 2010: Jeffie Was Here

NUVO review by Sam Watermeier

Writer-director Todd Edwards takes a risk in his latest independent film by satirizing the very genre that supports such "fresh" interpretations on creativity and creative types. *Jeffie Was Here* is a sneering indie film deftly poking fun at sneering indie films. Thankfully, it does this quite well.

Protagonists Alan and Amanda Mangold (co-writer Peter Bedgood and Alexis Raben), are a young couple that embarks on a cross-country road trip when Alan's grandmother passes away. Alan enthusiastically proclaims the trip a great chance for self-discovery and time to gather inspiration for his novel — two rather self-indulgent motives fully exploited by Bedgood in his performance.

The film unfolds in an improv style that itself borders on indie film cliché. But the episodic structure is fitting in that it mirrors the free-flowing unpredictability of Alan and Amanda's road trip, including the "speed bump" they hit after inviting a hitchhiking drifter along to help pay for gas. That drifter is Jeffie, an eccentric played by writer-director Edwards.

Like many characters of this genre, Jeffie is a smug pseudo-intellectual. He dresses in drab Communist garb and carries around his demo record — a collection of moody hippie ballads about the environment. Edwards' ironic, exuberantly quirky performance is a grandiose parody of the indie spirit.

As the film unfolds, you realize that Alan and Amanda are not too different from Jeffie. Edwards uses the drifter as a fun-house mirror to hold up to their prejudices — and ours too. He shines a light on the detached hipster cool of Alan and Amanda and the hypocrisy of those like Jeffie who judge them.

Jeffie Was Here is refreshing. Rarely do you see filmmakers satirize the genre in which they are working. Especially when that genre is one taken as seriously as the "indie road movie" (i.e. *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Away We Go*, *My Own Private Idaho*).

Bottom line: A dizzying and cathartic comedic spectacle satirizing the often self-important genre we've all been itching to parody.

Director: Todd Edwards

Producers: Katie Hooten, Timothy Hooten

Cast: Peter Bedgood, Alexis Raben, Todd Edwards, Christine Rose, and Ken Marino. (USA)