

The View From Tall



PRESS KIT

A Film by Caitlin Parrish and Erica Weiss
www.cowlampfilms.com/the-view-from-tall
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SHORT SYNOPSIS

A 17-year-old student finds an unlikely lifeline in her therapist after a sexual transgression. As the lines of propriety between two lonely souls are slowly broken, she has to navigate the thorny issues of age, lust, and leaving one's life behind.



LONG SYNOPSIS

Justine is like many 17-year-olds who struggle in high school: She is smart but unpopular, her parents don't understand her and even her sister pretends not to know her in public. What sets Justine apart is that the entire school is aware of her recent sexual relationship with a teacher. Feeling both visible and ignored to uncomfortable degrees, she is mandated to see a therapist, Douglas, a disabled man with demons of his own. Justine finds a sympathetic ear in Douglas, and ultimately recognizes an equally lonely kindred spirit. As the lines of propriety between them are stretched, Justine must navigate the thorny issues of age, lust and leaving adolescent life behind. First-time directors Caitlin Parrish and Erica Weiss bring their years of theatrical experience and collaboration to this unique and rare take on female empowerment on the cusp of adulthood.

THE DIRECTORS

Erica Weiss is a Joseph Jefferson Award nominated theatre director and filmmaker based in Chicago, Illinois. She was the recipient of The Goodman Theatre's Michael Maggio Directing Fellowship, is a proud ensemble member of The Gift Theatre Company, and the former Associate Artistic Director of Route 66 Theatre Company. Her primary passions lie in the development of new work and bringing female voices to the stage and screen.

Weiss is a longtime and frequent collaborator with writer Caitlin Parrish, directing their world premiere productions of *The Downpour* (Joseph Jefferson Nominee for Best Production, Best Director, Best New Work, and Best Lead Actress), and *A Twist of Water* with Route 66 Theatre Company and Off-Broadway at 59 E. 59. In the fall, she will make her Steppenwolf directing debut with Caitlin Parrish's *The Burials*, the first show of the 2016-2017 Steppenwolf for Young Adults season. Other upcoming projects include *The Grapes of Wrath* with The Gift Theatre and the world premiere of *Distance* by Jerre Dye with Strawdog Theatre. They are developing their original pilot *Red Line* with Warner Brothers Studios.



**ERICA
WEISS**

CAITLIN PARRISH

Caitlin Parrish's career began at age 18 when she won the 2003 National Young Playwrights Competition with her first play *The View from Tall*, which subsequently ran Off-Broadway. A subsequent production in Chicago was her first collaboration with Erica Weiss, with whom she's worked for fourteen years in theatre, television, and film. Her writing collaborator and co-director Erica Weiss directed their sold-out hit *A Twist of Water* for Route 66 Theatre Company, which also enjoyed an Off-Broadway run at 59E59. Route 66 also recently produced the world premiere of her play *The Downpour*, which was named a finalist by the American Theatre Critics Association for the Steinberg Award for Best New American Play - an honor *A Twist of Water* received in 2011 as well. Her new play, *The Burials*, will have its world premiere at Steppenwolf Theatre in the fall, directed by Weiss. Her work in television includes stints as a writer for *Emily Owens, M.D.*, *Under the Dome*, and *Supergirl*. She is a recipient of the prestigious Humanitas Award for her original television pilot *Painkiller*. Parrish and Weiss' pilot *Red Line* has been optioned by Warner Brothers television.



INTERVIEW

What was your inspiration for this film?

More than anything, we wanted to make the film we wish had existed when we were seventeen. So many seventeen-year-old girls are lost, and sexual, and beyond their years in a way we rarely see reflected on screen, and we wanted to be as respectful and honest about the moral ambiguities of that time as possible.

Any notable ways the cast came together?

We are Chicago theatre artists, so we were eager to cast from the staggering talent pool of theatre actors in Chicago. Long before we got to the audition stage, we had already written the role of Douglas for Michael Patrick Thornton (*Private Practice*). When *The View from Tall* was a play, the character of Douglas was

not disabled. But Mike did a reading of the play a few years ago with his company (The Gift Theatre) it was suddenly impossible to picture anyone else playing the role. So, when Caitlin wrote the screenplay, she adapted Douglas with Mike in mind, incorporating his physical disability into the story. His performance is gorgeous, and the story's better for it. Amanda Drinkall, our Justine, was a Chicago theatre actress on the rise who had done barely any on-camera work, and in her audition we saw something that demanded to be captured on screen. Erica had seen Carolyn Braver, our Paula, in a play, and she was the first person we wanted to see for this role - and she too had very little film experience. Since production ended, both actresses have been seen on television and on huge stages in Chicago and New York, so we feel incredibly lucky to have cast them in their feature film debuts.





How did the crew come together?

Our first collaboration was on the play version of *The View from Tall*. That was the production where we discovered we had a shared vision and mission as storytellers, and that's when we became art wives.

In the almost fourteen years since that first production in college, we've been working together on plays as a writer/director team. So this film's story is responsible for our friendship, working relationship, and everything will do together from here on in, especially promoting feminist hiring practices. We made it our mission to have as many awesome ladies running this show as possible, so our first hires were cinematographer Stephanie Dufford, and producer Amanda Pflieger.

Anything notable about composer/soundtrack?

Lindsay Jones is a master of music composition and documenting travel snafus on social media. We'd worked with him on our play *A Twist of Water* in 2011, and he was our first and only choice for the movie.

Also, we had seen The Decemberists in concert together 17 times in the last 12 years. To have a song of their's close out first movie is a super fan's dream.

How long have you been working on the film, from idea to execution?

How long was the shoot itself?

From the time the play was written to the time the film was completed, about thirteen years went by. But if we're purely discussing the film, the script was written in late 2012 and we locked in the summer of 2015. The shoot itself was seventeen days with one day for B-roll.

What was the biggest obstacle you've encountered in your filmmaking career and how did you overcome it?

Just believing we could do it in the first place. It's so daunting, when you first begin the process, and when you're in the middle and you realize, "This is going to be four years of our lives." Starting was hard, but now we've done that. And all we want is to do it again.



MAIN CAST



Amanda Drinkall has excelled as a stage actress including Chicago Theatre credits: *Mary Page Marlowe* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *Venus in Fur*, *Measure for Measure* (Goodman Theatre); *White Guy on the Bus*, *Funnyman* (Northlight Theatre); *Rest* (Victory Gardens); *Pygmalion* (Oak Park Festival Theatre); *Last Train to Nibroc* (Haven Theatre-Jeff Award nomination, Best Actress); *Great Expectations* (Strawdog); *Pride and Prejudice* (Lifeline); *Hamlet is Dead*, *No Gravity*, *The Skriker*, *The Love of the Nightingale*, and *Pullman, WA* (Red Tape Theatre); as well as more than a dozen shows with The Back Room Shakespeare Project. TV credits include; *Chicago Med*, NBC's upcoming web series *Bobby & Iza*. *The View from Tall* marks her feature film debut.

AMANDA
DRINKALL

MICHAEL PATRICK THORNTON



Co-founder/Artistic Director of The Gift Theatre, Michael was most recently seen onstage as King Richard III in The Gift Theatre's *Richard III* at Steppenwolf and in Will Eno's one-man show *Title And Deed* (Lookingglass) which led to Michael receiving *Time Out Magazine's* "Best Actor" award. Michael was also seen in the nationally-acclaimed inaugural rolling premiere of fellow Gift ensemble member Andrew Hinderaker's *Colossal* at Olney Theatre as well as Iago in *Othello* at The Gift Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville's *Our Town*, and the Midwest Premiere of Will Eno's *Middletown* at Steppenwolf, directed by Les Waters.

Carolyn Braver made her Broadway debut last spring as Zoe in *Airline Highway*, a role she originated at Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago. Film and television credits include; *Mercy Street*, *The View from Tall* and *Chicago Fire*. Her theatre credits include: *Leveling Up*, *Airline Highway* (Steppenwolf), *The Knowledge* (Steep Theatre), *Princes of Waco* (Signal Ensemble).



CAROLYN BRAVER

JOSH BYWATER

Josh Bywater's television credits include *Chicago Fire*, *Crisis* (NBC), *Betrayal*, *As The World Turns*, and *Grey's Anatomy*. Film includes the features *Our Father* and *The View from Tall*, as well as several shorts that are currently making the festival circuit. Theatre includes *Fat Pig and One Arm* (Steppenwolf Theatre), *The Story* (Goodman Theatre), *Cicada* (Route 66), *Bea Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable* (ARS Nova), *The Aliens*, *The Crucible*, *All My Sons*, and *Lebensraum*, among dozens of others. He has written several short plays and currently has his first feature under construction. He studied at the School at Steppenwolf, is a proud member of SAG/AFTRA, and has been a resident artist with The CRY HAVOC Company, based out of NYC, since 2009.



ADDITIONAL CAST

Connie
LIA MORTENSEN

Warren
JAMES LEAMING

Brett
ERIC SLAVES

Will
CHRIST BOYKIN

Anne
ASHLEIGH LATHROP

Ben
DREW BENDER

Diana Lawrence
HERSELF

Janitor
MATTHEW BONACCORSO

Megan
MOLLY HERNANDEZ

Natalie Duke
HERSELF

Dancer
DANIEL SPAGNUOLO

Rebecca
CASEY TUTTON

Female Teacher
GENEVIEVE THIERS

Green Mill Singer
JULIA MERCHANT

CREW

Producer

MARY KAY COOK
AMANDA PFLIEGER

Music

LINDSAY JONES

Cinematography

LESLIE DUFFORD

Editing

SARAH BETH SHAPIRO

Production Design

AMANDA BRINTON

Art Direction

DREW BENDER

Costume Design

ALARIE HAMMOCK

Makeup

JUSTINE LOSOYA
AMBER TALARICO

Production Management

MARY KAY COOK

Second Unit Director

TIMOTHY FARRELL
NICK HELPERS

Art Department

ROBIN LEE

Boom Operator

TIM CALISTRO

Sound Mixer

ROB DAVIS

Gaffer

ERIN HUGHES

Loader

MIGUEL A. TORRES

Assistant Editors

RYAN PATRICK BRENNAN
SUNGHWAN MOON

Script Supervisor

TORI SCOTT



PUBLICITY



“Drinkall gives a pitch-perfect performance as a girl, not yet a woman. She’s empathetic, enlightened and empowering.” - Courtney Howard, freshfiction.tv

“...this Chicago-set love story breaks new ground with the protagonist’s self-knowledge and directness.” - Andrea Gronvall, chicagoreader.com

“...explores questions of consent and ethics in sexual relationships where there’s a significant power differential.” - Sophie Winter, Vox Magazine

“*The View from Tall* is a very slippery piece in a good way... It’s easy to invest what happens to Justine, and the film is defiantly non-judgmental without being boringly even-handed.” - Michael Phillips, Chicago Tribune

“[The script] is immensely witty and honest in its study of stigmatized people craving to be seen and embraced for who they are.” - Matt Fagerholm, Roger Ebert

“It is a bold story that takes a rather taboo subject and turns it into a thought-provoking character study... it is simple yet complex.” - Scott Menzel, wliveentertainment.com