

## **SUMMER GLAU INTRODUCES US TO HER GIANT ROBOT PAL JEFF 1000**

January 17, 2014 by Liz Joseph Mccabe

*The always ass-kicking Summer Glau is back in Wired's newly launched documentary-style satirical web series Jeff 1000. In which the star of Firefly, Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles, Arrow, Alphas, Dollhouse, The 4400, and everything else you've even had a passing interest in, plays herself partnering with a giant robot on the streets of LA. We recently caught up with Glau — while about to give birth to her first child — and the genre superstar spoke about how she got involved with creator Michael Karnow's six-episode series, as well as her hopes for a second season...*

### **NERDIST: Your new series is different from a lot of what we've seen lately just by having a non-CGI robot**

SUMMER GLAU: He's real! It was nice for me as his scene partner because it didn't take long at all before I felt a true connection with him. It helped me as an actress to have him there.

### **N: You're playing a version of yourself in this series. How close is the on-screen Summer Glau to the real one?**

SG: Our initial idea was that we had this opportunity to work with Jeff, and we wanted to create a loose storyline that would enable us to be put into lots of different funny situations in everyday life, things that people can relate to. We started out with the fact that I'm an actress and Jeff becomes an actor. We become best friends. So the scenarios that we're in, in these first digital shorts that we did, are similar to situations that I'm in all the time. Of course this is fantasy and there's a satire to it, but I found in these first shorts that we did I really was being myself reacting to Jeff. Just enjoying him. All the actors come from improv and we kept it loose, and as we go along — we'd love to make more — we are going to see Jeff in all kinds of everyday, LA situations. Not necessarily poking fun at being in the entertainment industry, but [asking], "What's it like for a guy that happens to be a robot that's best friends with Summer? How do they relate to each other?"

### **N: How did the project begin?**

SG: Well, when I came in it was a collaboration between [Legacy Effects], which is an amazing effects house that had created this nine-foot robot. There's a lot of green screen in our industry now, and for Jeff to exist in real life is exciting, and Wired wanted to create some kind of film for him. From there they collaborated with Michael Karnow who is an amazing writer I've worked with a lot in the past. He was a co-creator of Alphas, and then from there he invited Nick Copus, who is an incredible director that I've worked with a lot in the past on different sci-fi and fantasy projects. It grew from there. We had this robot and we wanted to create a story and make something cool that we could shoot quickly. This is what came of it. I'm incredibly proud that we shot it in one day. That wasn't easy, because Jeff is so big we had to be very creative about even what space we rented to put him in. We didn't want it to be about him being this huge robot. We wanted that to almost be an afterthought. But the characters in LA are so self-absorbed that they don't even really notice. People look at him like he's normal. [Laughs.] So that was fun.

### **N: What was it like shooting the series in a single day?**

SG: It went by so fast. But there were some logistical challenges. Because Jeff is nine feet tall, so trying to find the right camera angle to fit him in with everybody else was a challenge. But in the end I actually think it worked for us. It made it more fun and more creative for all of his fellow actors. I loved that it was one day's work. Ten years ago when I started nobody was doing that, and now you can get together with other creative people that you admire and you can generate your own series and put it online and get people to watch it in a much more energetic way. I love that about this medium.

**N: You've played plenty of memorable characters in a variety of fan-favorite shows. Is there one that most closely mirrors your own personality, aside from the Summer Glau we meet in this series?**

SG: [Laughs.] Actually, it's interesting that each role that I've played throughout my life has been the right role for me at that time of my life. Just to give an example — when I first moved to LA and I met Joss, and he then cast me in *Firefly*, I had hardly acted at all. I didn't know anything about being on set, I didn't know how to hit a mark yet, find my light. A lot of times the camera operator would actually have to reach out from behind the camera and move me. Because I was just that green. In a way I think that River was a perfect role for me at that point, because she had so much to give and didn't know how to express it yet. She was so different from everybody else and didn't know how to communicate. I just needed a safe place, like a family. That character was perfect for where I was in my life at that point. I felt like I grew up with her. From there, I moved on. I always seek to find a role that I can put myself into. I still look for that.

**N: Were you a sci-fi fan growing up?**

SG: I was a fan of science-fiction literature. My mom read a lot to us. We were home-schooled when we were little. So she did a lot of reading. We loved *The Hobbit* and Madeleine L'Engle and C.S. Lewis. A lot of fantasy and science fiction. It really shaped my imagination. I think that it was a great prep for me when I moved to LA. There's a lot of different kinds of actresses, and once I started auditioning for these kinds of roles, in fantasy and science fiction, it was just a good fit for me.

**N: You've said there could be a side to Jeff that's darker than that which is initially suggested. On a scale of 1 to 10 — with 1 being Wall-E and 10 being the T-1000 — how potentially menacing is this robot?**

SG: [Laughs.] I think this robot is incredibly dangerous because he is so good at filling the role of being a best friend to me, and when I think of him and when I relate to him, I don't even think of him as being a robot. I've heard his story about how got downsized from an auto plant in Ohio and moved out here, and I feel like he needs me. And I'm letting him in on all of my day-to-day life and all of my personal secrets. We're working on the idea that his intentions are far more complex than what we've come up with in these first digital shorts. It'll be interesting.

We're also expressing the fact that people are very wrapped up into their electronics — their cell phones, their computers — they're putting everything about themselves into these machines. I'm doing that with Jeff. He's become my best friend, and there may be consequences.

**N: Can you say what's next for you?**

SG: My next project is having my baby. [Laughs.] I'm very pregnant. After that, I'm very excited about getting back to work. Right now I'm just doing a lot of mommy preparation. I would love to do more Jeff-1000s. There's so many more storylines that we have ideas for. I love that we can just put it online and get it out right away. So I

want to do more of that and maybe find a new series to work on as well. I'm hardcore nesting right now. [Laughs.]

**N: Thank you so much for your time, Summer. We hope to see more.**

SG: Yay! I'm so excited. I hope we do get to make more. Thank you.

Taken from nerdist's website:

<https://www.nerdist.com/2015/01/exclusive-summer-glau-introduces-us-to-her-giant-robot-pal-jeff-1000/>