

- Linda
Sorensen

1. Please describe your relationship to the candidate?

As the Seasonal Administrative Assistant for the Mackinac Island Police Department (2019-2022), Officer Michael Gruits became a co-worker upon being hired as a Seasonal Police Officer in April 2021. I regularly worked with Seasonal Officer Gruits providing administrative support until my departure for the season at the end of September 2021. Upon my return to work the following season in April 2022, I learned Officer Gruits was hired as a permanent, full-time police officer for Mackinac Island Police Department. I once again regularly worked with Officer Gruits providing administrative support until my departure at the end of October 2022 at which time, I also resigned from the Seasonal Administrative Assistant position and become a full-time retiree.

In addition to having been co-workers, Officer Gruits has also become a trusted friend and is one of my favorite authors.

2. What are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses?

Officer Gruits is extremely dedicated and loyal to his profession. He often goes above and beyond in his service to both residents and visitors of Mackinac Island. He responds to every situation with a high level of professionalism, courtesy and diplomacy. He is personable, conscientious and very dependable.

Officer Gruits seems to hold himself to a higher standard than most. While this is typically a strength, it can also be seen as a weakness in the event he is unable to meet his lofty expectations at any given time.

3. Does the candidate work well with others?

Officer Gruits works very well with others. He is always willing to step up, when needed, especially to assist co-workers. He always goes the extra mile to help out. He is very much a team member but takes the lead when the situation calls for it.

4. Can you describe a time when you watched the candidate face a challenging or stressful situation? How did they handle it?

I have personally witnessed Officer Gruits handle many different challenging and stressful situations. It is the nature of the job. During 2021, there was a particular situation with a somewhat homeless and emotionally disturbed person who kept showing up at PD looking for assistance. He would often cause a commotion in the lobby until Officer Gruits stepped in. He was able to calm the gentleman down, gave him guidance and direction, and helped make arrangements that helped make a difference.

I have witnessed Officer Gruits make uneventful arrests in difficult situations and expertly interview victims, suspects, and witnesses.

5. Would you describe the candidate as dependable?

Yes, Officer Gruits is very dependable. He manages his time quite well.

6. What are some accomplishments you've noticed the candidate reach?

Officer Gruits has been trained as a Teaching, Educating, and Mentoring (T.E.A.M.) School Liaison Officer. He is proud of his ability to engage with K-12 students at the Mackinac Island Public School to make the school and students safer while promoting responsible citizenship and positive character traits.

7. Would you hire the candidate?

Yes, without hesitation.

8. What skills does the candidate have that you believe make them stand out as a quality candidate?

Officer Gruits displays tenacious investigative skills, is very detail oriented, and is very capable of multi-tasking. When the situation calls for it, he can identify a problem and make sensible suggestions to solve the problem. When it comes to locating missing/lost individuals, stolen bikes, etc. he seems to have a sixth sense when it comes to finding them.

9. How would you describe the candidate's communication and listening skills?

Officer Gruits is cool, calm and collected when interacting with others. He patiently listens to difficult callers as well as persons expressing concern in person. Because of his well-honed communication and listening skills, Officer Gruits is, more often than not, able to arbitrate and/or diffuse tense situations in a peaceful manner.

10. Would you ever work with the candidate?

If the opportunity ever presented itself to once again work with Officer Gruits, I would not hesitate to do so.

11. Describe the candidate's work ethic?

Officer Gruits displays a very strong work ethic. He takes the necessary time to fully understand situations and take appropriate action. He serves as an inspiration to co-workers so much so that when faced with various situations, myself and others would often ask ourselves "What Would Mike Do"? In 2021, one of the MSP Troopers took it upon himself at his own expense to purchase blue rubber wrist bracelets with the initials "W.W.M.D" to remind those of us wearing the bracelet to for officers and staff to wear to remind ourselves to ask that same question.

12. Why would you recommend the candidate for this particular position?

In the three years that he has lived and worked on Mackinac Island, Officer Gruits has developed into a leader among his peers and become a well-respected member of the community. He has the necessary experience, education and understanding of community policing to effectively supervise departmental operations and to collaborate with city officials, other law enforcement agencies, businesses and members of the community to sensibly enforce laws and ordinances to help create and maintain a safe environment for those who live, work and/or visit Mackinac Island. He will be an excellent leader which will benefit everyone greatly.

~~Robert Griffin~~
- Tpr Robert Griffin

1. Please describe your relationship to the candidate?

Michael Gruits and I worked together as Pennsylvania State Troopers and were assigned to work midnight shift together. PA State Police require two Troopers in one patrol unit during the overnight hours. Michael and I became close co-workers and I learned that he was a dependable friend outside of work. A person that is willing to drop what they are doing to assist, and stay until the job is done, no matter what the task.

2. What are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses?

Michael Gruits is a very determined and self motivated person who always goes above and beyond when given an assignment. There were many shifts where Michael's shift ended, but he remained in order to make sure the task was accomplished. I believe his strengths are how empathetic he can be when taking a report from a victim, or even when making an arrest and putting a person in jail.

3. Does the candidate work well with others?

In the years that I worked alongside Michael I did not observe him show any difficulty with his coworkers or the public. His personality was always liked and welcomed, and he always projected a positive attitude that was contagious to others in the room.

4. Can you describe a time when you watched the candidate face a challenging or stressful situation? How did they handle it?

I witnessed Michael endure a health battle when he impaled his foot with a rusty nail that later became infected and landed him in the ICU for multiple days. At the same time that he battled his infection, his household suffered a catastrophe when his upstairs bathroom flooded and damaged their house, subsequently causing the family to be displaced. Michael's entire family was temporarily housed in a local hotel. During this time Michael maintained a positive attitude and, unless you were close with him, other people would never know the turmoil he endured. His genuine positive attitude and resilience was how he overcame a very difficult situation.

5. Would you describe the candidate as dependable?

Michael is one of the most reliable and dependable people in my life. I know that I can call him and he would find a way to help me out. When I worked with him I never doubted his support or back-up when conducting investigations or proactive arrests.

6. What are some accomplishments you've noticed the candidate reach?

From knowing Michael, I know that he has completed a successful career in the US Military, became a PA State Trooper, and is a very involved parent in his children's life. While working as a PA Trooper, he was asked to become a Field Training Officer, a position only offered to Troopers who display a solid work ethic, balanced morals, and a positive attitude. There is no doubt that if Michael had stayed with the PA State Police, he would have promoted in rank.

7. Would you hire the candidate?

Michael has a way of creating a family atmosphere when involved in a unit. I feel that a person who can create an atmosphere that is inclusive to all is the person that I would hire.

8. What skills does the candidate have that you believe make them stand out as a quality candidate?

Michael has interpersonal skills that set him apart from other people. When I first began working with Michael I noticed that he waved AT EVERYONE. I asked him why he waves to everyone and he responded, "Because you never know what kind of day a person is having, and how a simple wave can positively affect their life." The training that he has received both as a US Serviceman and as a PA Trooper will ensure that he has the ability to complete his Chiefly duties, but it is the family oriented qualities that will make him a great leader and THE RIGHT LEADER for your police department.

9. How would you describe the candidate's communication and listening skills?

Michael performed his job as described by the Department, and would always look to do more and ask for guidance from supervisors. If there was a problem without a clear answer, he would seek out the right supervisor for guidance to fix the issue the right way on the first attempt. Michael always displayed a strong ability to listen to victims, arrestees, and just a citizen at the coffee shop.

10. Would you ever work with the candidate?

I spent a long time trying to talk Michael out of leaving PA, but his heart was set on your home. He is deeply missed as a PA Trooper and we as a unit often reflect on the good times that we

shared with Trooper Michael GRUITS. He is a strong-willed person who is always focused on doing the right thing and getting it done right the first time.

11. Describe the candidate's work ethic?

Michael always came to work with a smile on his face and go-getter attitude. These qualities may seem minor, but policing can be a demeaning and thankless job at times. To have a co-worker that would show up ready to "get after it" day after day with a positive attitude was a refreshing reminder that we were making a difference. There was no call for service that was too minor or too extreme. Michael carried the same compassionate attitude throughout all of his investigations.

12. Why would you recommend the candidate for this particular position?

I believe that Michael would be the perfect fit for Chief. He has right mindset to lead fellow officers and uses common sense when decision making. Just a short visit with Gruits and you will see the qualities that I have come to know as Trooper Gruits.

Tpr. Burnette

1. Please describe your relationship to the candidate?

For the summers of 2022 and 2023, I (Tpr. Jeffery Burnette) was assigned to the Mackinac Island Detail with the Michigan State Police St. Ignace Post. Officer Mike Gruits was employed with the Mackinac Island Police Department during my time on Mackinac Island. I worked closely with Officer Gruits during my time on Mackinac Island.

2. What are the candidate's strengths and weaknesses?

Officer Gruits is the example that all law enforcement officers strive to be. Officer Gruits strengths include but are not limited to, excellent communication skills, friendly and approachable personality, and strong leadership skills.

3. Does the candidate work well with others?

Officer Gruits works very well with other. Officer Gruits can lead a team when needed but is not afraid to listen to suggestion and follow when necessary.

4. Can you describe a time when you watched the candidate face a challenging or stressful situation? How did they handle it?

During my time with Officer Gruits, I observed him handle multiple stressful and challenging situation. The major issue Officer Gruits was faced with was lack of leadership and equipment for him to do his job effectively. Officer Gruits took it on his own accord to be a leader for his fellow members of the Mackinac Island Police Department and to make the best out of the situation he was given.

5. Would you describe the candidate as dependable?

Officer Gruits is dependable and reliable. Officer Gruits has always been there when I needed him and isn't afraid to give suggestions and honest recommendations when asked.

6. What are some accomplishments you've noticed the candidate reach?

Officer Gruits sets daily goals for himself. Officer Gruits is always striving to complete his goals and become a better law enforcement officer and member of the Mackinac Island community.

7. Would you hire the candidate?

If it was my decision, I would hire Officer Gruits for the Chief position with the Mackinac Island Police Department.

8. What skills does the candidate have that you believe make them stand out as a quality candidate?

As previously stated, Officer Gruits has shown that he is a leader, has strong decision making skills, has excellent communication skills, and is the example that everyone should strive to be.

9. How would you describe the candidate's communication and listening skills?

As previously stated, Officer Gruits has excellent communication and listening skills.

10. Would you ever work with the candidate?

I worked with Officer Gruits for the summers of 2022 and 2023 when I was assigned to the Mackinac Island Detail with the Michigan State Police St. Ignace Post.

11. Describe the candidate's work ethic?

Officer Gruits is a hard working member of the Mackinac Island Police Department. Officer Gruits is always on time and handles his case load in an appropriate time frame.

12. Why would you recommend the candidate for this particular position?

I believe Officer Gruits is the best candidate for this position. Officer Gruits has already proven that he has the skills and ability to be the Chief of the Mackinac Island Police Department. I believe Officer Gruits will provide the leadership and guidance that the members of the Mackinac Island Police Department need to be successful.

Tpr. Jeffery Burnette

Michigan State Police Gaylord post

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