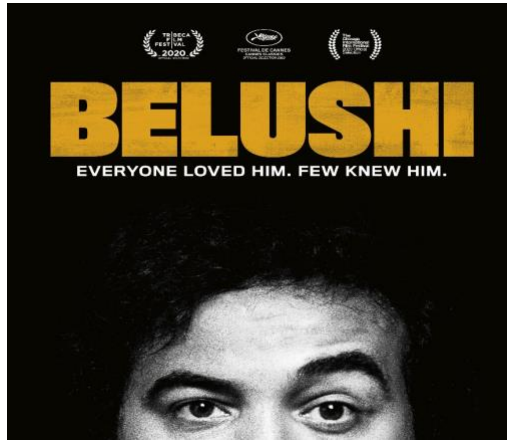


SHOWTIME DOCUMENTARY FILMS  
Presents A PASSION PICTURES Production  
In Association With THIS MACHINE  
An R.J. CUTLER Film



Produced by JOHN BATTSEK, p.g.a. R.J. CUTLER, p.g.a.  
DIANE BECKER, p.g.a. TREVOR SMITH, p.g.a.  
Written And Directed by R.J. CUTLER

In the 1970s, John Belushi focused a generation's anarchic energy into a crucible of genius and raucousness that was unparalleled, hitting new heights in 1978 when Belushi had the highest-grossing comedy film of all time (*National Lampoon's Animal House*) and the No. 1 album in the country (*The Blues Brothers' Briefcase Full of Blues*) while starring on the most influential show on TV, *Saturday Night Live*. It was a genius that sprung from a voracious mind, a need to push boundaries, an outsider's drive, and his love for his high school girlfriend, Judy Jacklin, who became his soulmate and wife until he died in 1982.

In the intimate and powerful documentary *BELUSHI*, Academy Award-nominated and Emmy award-winning director R.J. CUTLER (*The War Room*, *A Perfect Candidate*, *Listen To Me Marlon*) illuminates the actor, musician, and comedic force in a way never seen before. By using in-depth personal interviews with JUDY JACKLIN BELUSHI, DAN AYKROYD, LORNE MICHAELS, CARRIE FISHER, IVAN REITMAN, HAROLD RAMIS, JIM BELUSHI, and others, Belushi's life and career is appreciated in full — not just his massive success on *SNL* and in movies, but also his childhood in Illinois; his days with Chicago's *Second City*, the Off-Broadway show *Lemmings*, and *The National Lampoon Radio Hour*, and his friendships and conflicts. His own thoughts are shared through letters and poetry to Judy, as a treasure trove of moments capture an American talent that was fiercely inspired, and a brilliance that was incomparably *BELUSHI*.

Showtime Documentary Films Presents A Passion Pictures Production in Association with This Machine.

An R.J. Cutler Film *BELUSHI* Executive Producers Bill Couturié, Sean Daniel, Vinnie Malhotra, Andrew Ruhemann. Original Music by Tree Adams. Music Supervisor Liz Gallacher. Animation by Robert Valley. Graphics by Stefan Nadelman. Story Producer Austin Wilkin. Co-Producers Ryan Gallagher, Carolyne Jurriaans. Edited by Joe Beshenkovsky. Ace Editor Maris Berzins. Produced by John Battsek, p.g.a. R.J.Cutler, p.g.a. Diane Becker, p.g.a. Trevor Smith, p.g.a. Written and Directed by R.J. Cutler

## OVERVIEW

“*This is what I want to do, be an actor and create!*” John Belushi to his girlfriend and future wife, Judy Jacklin, after seeing a Second City performance

The creative energy and rowdy dynamism inside the characters John Belushi brought to life felt as if they were always in the American landscape, ready to emerge: Pete the Olympia diner counterman, insisting his customers have a *cheesebugga, cheesebugga!*; the pony-tailed workingman warrior Samurai Futuba; frat-house animal “Bluto” Blutarsky; cynical but tender Chicago reporter Ernie Souchak; and “Joliet” Jake Blues, frontman for the Blues Brothers, the world’s greatest showband and revue from Calumet City, Illinois.

Those creations and others burst forth from an outsider kid who grew up in Wheaton, Illinois, always entertaining his siblings and neighbors if not necessarily his Albanian immigrant father. As Belushi anchored Chicago’s famed Second City improv theater in the early 1970s, *The National Lampoon Radio Hour*, Lampoon’s off-Broadway show *Lemmings*, *Saturday Night Live*’s original Not Ready For Prime-Time Players, and hit movies including *National Lampoon’s Animal House* and *The Blues Brothers*, his last name defined a generation and an era.

In *BELUSHI*, award-winning documentarian R.J. Cutler — director of *A Perfect Candidate*, *The September Issue*, and *The World According to Dick Cheney*, and producer of *The War Room* and *Listen to Me Marlon* — shows how stage, TV, film, and music success burst out of the comic legend via insights from those who knew him best: Close friends, costars, collaborators, and most vitally, Judy Jacklin, the woman who was his partner and soulmate from their teenage courtship through their marriage, which lasted until Belushi died of an overdose on March 5, 1982.

“Not long after John died, Judy put together an oral history of his life through conversations with those closest to him,” says Cutler. “Her audio tapes were extensive, and throughout the years, she stored the raw audio, along with her photos and film archives, in her basement in her house on Martha’s Vineyard.”

As the self-described steward of Belushi's legacy, Judy conducted initial interviews in the '80s with Dan Aykroyd, Gilda Radner, Lorne Michaels, Carrie Fisher, Harold Ramis, Jim Belushi, Ivan Reitman, *SNL* castmates and writers, and many others. "I wanted to share with people who John was, how he came through this world so quickly and how he influenced so many people," says Judy, who subsequently wrote two books, *Samurai Wife* (1991) and the oral history *Belushi: A Biography* (2005).

"I kept the master tapes of those '80s interviews, hoping that they'd someday be part of a project that looked at John in a bigger context, and about comedy in our country's history, its social importance, how it reflects what's happening in America," says Judy. "You can learn a lot about the culture through what we laugh at."

Some 15 years later, Judy began working with journalist and author Tanner Colby on the 2005 biography, and his additional interviews and work contributed to the copious archives. Several years later, producer John Battsek began discussions with Judy about a potential documentary film — though that journey was a long one.

"Belushi was funny, cool, irreverent, and had a true vulnerability — and he was an unlikely hero, which I loved," says BELUSHI producer John Battsek. "A friend who knew how passionate I was about John introduced me to Judy around 2006. I told her I'd love to make a film about John, and she was charming, but she said no in the nicest way. So I called her twice a year, every year, for 10 years. She always said she wasn't ready to do it."

When Battsek discovered that producers Sean Daniel and Bill Couturié had begun an arrangement with Judy, he joined forces with them. "Sean and Bill agreed to let me take the reins, and after R.J. and I showed *Listen to Me Marlon* to Judy, she loved it, and that got the ball rolling," says Battsek.

Judy, a producer on the *Lampoon* radio show as well as a writer, artist, and manager for many of the shows and acts Belushi was involved in — including the Blues Brothers — invited the filmmakers to go through the numerous boxes of audiotapes, film footage, letters, and photos in her basement. That

provided the scaffolding to what would become an illuminating and intimate look at one of comedy's most influential and important figures.

“John Belushi was a product of his time, and yet those times were also so heavily informed by him and his comedy and what he meant to the culture,” says BELUSHI producer Trevor Smith.

### DISCOVERING THE TAPES

The more than 50 hours of audiotapes and personal archives in Judy's basement are the heart and soul of BELUSHI. Cutler says that the intimacy of the voices guide the story, as with Stevan Riley's 2015 documentary *Listen to Me Marlon*, which Cutler and Battsek produced and which revolved around recordings by Marlon Brando. When Judy decided the time was right, the unboxing of the tapes began, and its treasures revealed themselves.

“Those boxes hadn't been opened in years, and they even had poems and letters John had written to Judy from when they were young, and throughout his life,” says Cutler. Adds Battsek, “I wasn't aware of the tapes when I first approached Judy about a film all those years ago. It was an extraordinary experience to go through her archives, as well as a poignant one. When you step into a place where someone is still sort of holding in their arms a person they loved, it's a privilege. It was kind of overwhelming. The interviews she taped are filled with love, care, regret, and such heartfelt emotions about John, and they're so powerful as a result.”

Says Judy, “I gave the filmmakers full access to the family photos and videos I had as well, and my brother-in-law Billy helped find a few things. Then they found some archival interview footage even I hadn't seen.”

“In addition to the material Judy had, we left no stone unturned in who we reached out to: John's high school friends, work associates, anyone who had ever written an article about him — you never know who has a box lying around with important stuff in it,” says Smith.

BELUSHI features new interviews with Judy, and the narrative revealed itself to Cutler through what was caught on audiotape. “I realized that speaking with people currently didn’t have the immediacy that Judy’s audio had,” says Cutler. “Those interviews, made within just a few years after John’s passing, were so raw. Plus, a number of chief figures in John’s life had since passed away, and their stories here are filled with such emotion.”

John’s letters and poems, as well as diary entries, restored 8mm and 16mm footage, and what the filmmakers used from over 1,000 photographs, expanded the scope while making BELUSHI an intimate experience.

“As with the tapes, I didn’t know the letters existed, but now I know we could never have made the film without them,” says Battsek. “They’re absolutely vital, because they connect us to his and Judy’s relationship in such a profound way. Those letters and John’s poetry to her are so emotional, and are also so universal in many of the issues and the struggles he’s discussing. They really were our Holy Grail.”

In BELUSHI, his written words are brought to life by *Saturday Night Live* alum Bill Hader. Says Cutler, “This film is the culmination of many gifts given to us. While Bill didn’t know John, he carried on John’s legacy on *SNL*, and when he heard we were interested in having him read John’s letters for the film, he said ‘yes’ sight unseen. To hear Bill read those poems and letters is to feel John’s beating heart. John’s words, which are used throughout the film, are just some of the amazing things that Judy so generously shared.”

### *BECOMING BELUSHI*

Belushi was born January 24, 1949, on Chicago’s west side and grew up in Wheaton, Illinois, from age 6. His father Adam, who ran a local diner, was an immigrant from Albania, as were his mother Agnes’ parents. From a young age, Belushi was rambunctious and artistic. In high school, football was his passion, though as he went through school Belushi performed skits with his friends and was the center of a band he and his pals had.

“In John’s background is the drama of the gifted child, as well as a story about the son of immigrant parents who is filled with his family’s hopes and ambitions, but is in many ways a foreigner to them,” says Cutler. “His future is brought about by the opportunity they’ve provided for him, but he’s nonetheless a complete stranger.”

Says Battsek, “Belushi’s story is an immigrant story, and absolutely an American story. I think that’s evident in the sense of insecurity or vulnerability we see in his performances. When you know about his childhood, it seems like he ought to have been more awkward in who he was. But instead, John developed the confidence to do it all.”

“John was a football star in high school in the mid-1960s in the middle of Illinois, a place where high school football is taken pretty seriously,” says Cutler. “Anything he did, he ended up conquering.”

Says Judy, “In life, so many things often work together to bring us to a certain point. In John’s case, it made him like a lightning rod. A friend of mine once said that John was everyone’s big brother, and reminded her of someone who, in a battle or a prison escape, would hold up the barbed wire for everyone to go under the fence.”

After John and Judy graduated from high school, John began acting in summer stock shows in Indiana, formed another band, and briefly attended the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where he created an improv group called the West Compass Players. He loved going to performances at Chicago’s Second City, eventually becoming a star member of its troupe (“After 14 Months, Belushi Has Only to Step On Stage to Get Laughs,” read one Chicago newspaper headline during his time there.) As recalled in *BELUSHI*, John — who used to go into neighbors’ homes to rattle off funny anecdotes when he was a kid — studied comedy albums by Bob Newhart and Jonathan Winters. “Mike Nichols’ time at Second City and Peter Sellers’ film performances and comedy background also inspired John,” says Judy. “He had all of these things going on inside of him.”

*BELUSHI* shows how Pete the Olympia Restaurant counterman on *SNL* (“*No Coke, Pepsi!*”) is based on Belushi’s dad, and it’s easy to see how characters like middle-aged nerd Larry Farber and

wide-bottomed midwestern kid Jeff Widette are affectionate parodies of his Illinois upbringing. Says Smith, “If you look at John’s characters, much of that springs from his own background. He utilized so many of his life experiences for his comedy.”

Since minimal footage existed of Belushi’s boyhood in the 1950s and early ’60s, the film evokes those childhood years through stunningly rendered animation by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Robert Valley.

“The question for us became, how do we bring that time to life when there’s mostly just audio, and that’s where the animation adds so much,” says Cutler. “Robert Valley brought the childhood and teenage John to life. I had the idea that the kid version of John, the four-year-old who’d go into neighbors’ living rooms to tell them funny stories, would be present throughout his life. Because all these eras inside him are deeply interconnected.”

“Valley does a brilliant job conveying John’s character through his eyes so we feel his vulnerability, insecurities, and hopes resonate through his life,” says Battsek. Adds Smith, “Robert Valley had a clear vision from day one for what the animation could be. There’s something profoundly emotional in his style, especially the facial expressions, that I’ve never seen before. The way R.J. incorporated the idea of John’s early years gives an emotional texture we couldn’t have achieved with archival footage.”

In *BELUSHI*, we see how a hunger for knowledge, along with the counterculture spirit of the ’60s and an understanding of satire, merged in his style. “John was so astute and well-read about history and politics,” says Judy. “He was constantly seeking, and really knew social issues. And he could narrow it all down to an eyebrow arch.”

### *LIVE FROM NEW YORK*

After success at Second City, John and Judy moved to New York City, where he co-starred in National Lampoon’s Off-Broadway show *Lemmings* at the Village Gate, and Judy worked in the art

department of *National Lampoon* magazine. When *Lampoon* cofounder, writer, and editor Michael O'Donoghue started the *National Lampoon Radio Hour*, Judy suggested Belushi to him, and he brought in such performers as Gilda Radner, Bill Murray, and Harold Ramis. As the show became a hit on over 100 stations across America, Belushi started writing and directing it as well. But while he'd mastered stage and radio, he was reluctant to do television

“John turned down, I believe, an offer to do a role on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, something in which the production company flies you to L.A., gives you a good amount of money, and you play a role in an episode. He turned it down — and we even liked the show!” says Judy. “One of the things John always said was, if he did TV, he'd be selling out. That was part of his whole thing. He wanted to do films, he wanted to do things in the Second City style, and when the *National Lampoon* radio show started, he really wanted to do that.”

Through first-person recollections, BELUSHI shows the crucial moment when *Saturday Night Live* — originally titled *Saturday Night* — was put together. Approached by producer Lorne Michaels, Belushi reluctantly put aside his ambivalence towards TV. Yet the audition process was fraught, and Belushi's connection with Michaels was tense, resulting in an early firing just before the start of the show. Once cast, though — and after Michaels came to terms with his own misgivings about Belushi — the Not Ready For Prime-Time Players were set.

“*Saturday Night Live*, in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, was part of a generation's struggle to make sense of the world,” says Cutler. And though Michaels spearheaded the creation of the show, “John was the one who found many of those people,” says Cutler. “He drew them together, and had worked with many of them on the *Lampoon Radio Hour*, and brought what he'd learned at Second City. He was instrumental in gathering them.”

“The show wasn't John's vision, but its spirit was,” adds Cutler. “His work on *SNL* had a profundity that extended beyond the sketches themselves. He captured the moment, and then he extended beyond that.”



“Today it’s taken for granted that comedy is a product of our culture, but back then it truly meant something unique, and John was able to put that all on a national stage with *SNL*,” says Smith. Even when Belushi would portray real people — Joe Cocker, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Brando as Don Corleone, or William Shatner as Capt. Kirk — “He was *inhabiting* that portrayal, as opposed to merely *imitating* them,” says Cutler. “Those performances are not imitations; they’re homages, which comes from a genuine love for who they are.”

Says Judy, “*Saturday Night Live* was like stage work for John, really. He loved doing live theater, and I think that’s where he gave his best performances. *SNL* had that as part of what it was.”

But tension behind-the-scenes grew (especially as Chevy Chase became the breakout first-season star) as the high-pressure atmosphere and sudden fame slammed together. “All of the *SNL* years were explosive and difficult,” says Judy. “For the cast, the show could be divisive, just the reality of what was going on. Though it was a strong ensemble, and he loved ensemble work, for John it didn’t have the friendliness of the Second City days.”

In addition, Belushi often had issues with the show’s women writers, and vice-versa — a conflict exacerbated by his drug use, and which is discussed during the interviews on the tapes.

“We of course knew that was a part of the story, that there was frustration with John and his increasing success and drug addiction — and the fact is, there were a lot of problems in his life as things got crazier,” says Cutler. “Lorne Michaels called John’s personal issues ‘a descent into hell,’ and we try to communicate the complexity of that. John was a jerk when it came to working with women writers, and he gave them a hard time. We try to tell the story in as clear-eyed a way as possible. I had no interest in shying away from that.”

Belushi’s wildness away from Studio 8H at Rockefeller Center also added to the stress.

“There was a feeling sometimes that John wasn’t at the studio much in the later years, people said he went out a lot, and he did — but he actually did both, he did go out *and* he was there for the

show,” says Judy. “He was hard-working, but it was a crazy time. He got caught up in it and overdid it, because that’s what he did in general.”

Through it all, Belushi’s relationship with Judy was his bedrock. And *SNL* strengthened his friendship with Dan Aykroyd who, as seen in *BELUSHI*, became with Judy the safe haven to which John always returned.

### *JUDY, DAN, AND A SENSE OF HOME*

Judy and John were married New Year’s Eve 1976 in Aspen, Colorado, a decade after they had met. Belushi met Aykroyd in Toronto in the early ’70s, and their odd-couple pairing — the tall, verbose Canadian and the shorter, hirsute Midwesterner — made their connection even more striking. Both relationships were pillars of Belushi’s creativity, and provided the fuel to get him where he wanted to go.

“When John and Judy connected, the key and the lock met each other and the door opened,” says Cutler. “Judy relates in the film what it was like for the two of them; the relationship was as unique as every relationship, but it had all of the complexities of any love story, and it had tragedy. But the depth of their connection covered it all.”

The pair also created a family for friends at their New York townhouse, including at Thanksgiving.

“Harold Ramis talks about how they were always the married couple who provided a literal and figurative home for the holidays for everybody else, and we’re so lucky to have footage in the film of all those old friends gathering for holiday celebrations,” says Cutler. “The ones who brought them together as a family were John and Judy. That love they carried from their late childhood also defined their adulthood.”

Says Battsek, “When we started the film, I didn’t fully understand the level to which we were

making the John-and-Judy love story, which was a beautiful thing. It was really a remarkable relationship.”

As was John’s connection to Dan, whose audio recollections in *BELUSHI* are especially poignant.

“John had a couple of strong friendships, and he always hung on to those friendships — we helped each other do that, in fact,” says Judy. “With Danny, he quickly knew that this was going to be a big friendship. John went up to Canada to do a *Lampoon* radio show, and he called me later saying, ‘I met this guy Danny, you’ll love him!’ He was gushing. They really balanced each other.”

Says Cutler, “Judy and John were yin-and-yang, but John and Dan were a different kind of soulmates. They found a friendship neither had experienced before, and they had the great good fortune to share years as friends and creative partners.” Adds Battsek, “We hear such love in Dan’s voice. For me, it’s one of the transcending elements of the film. Yes, it’s Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi, but it also represents me and *my* best friend, or you and *your* best friend — it’s people connecting with another person they develop a deep bond with. That’s a universal feeling.”

“There was immediate kinship that connected John and Dan from day one, and like John’s relationship with Judy, it was creative and remained constant through the years,” says Smith.

As Cutler explains, “So much of this film is about family. In the film, we don’t hear Dan say something like, ‘I knew we were going to be friends.’ He says: ‘It was love at first sight.’ Like how Judy’s friends say that Judy and John were one of the all-time great love stories. Love is such a fundamental theme of this film. It’s on all sides, including with audiences. The crowd reacting as John and Dan perform as the Blues Brothers — that’s love, too.”

## UNPARALLELED SUCCESS, AND HITTING THE BIG SCREEN

While *SNL* was television's hottest program, three writers from Belushi's *Lampoon* days — Harold Ramis, Douglas Kenney, and Chris Miller — were scripting a comedy that would become *National Lampoon's Animal House*, and they created a role just for Belushi that became a symbol of 1970s comedy: John "Bluto" Blutarsky, the food-fight-starting, toga-wearing, wild-man frat brother of Faber College's Delta Tau Chi house.

"John had a different approach for films that wasn't the same as stage or TV," says Judy. "You need to be ready to go when the set is, you maybe have to wait a long time between takes. But John still prepared a lot for his film roles — he'd remember scripts quickly. I'd go through scenes with him, and he would just know them."

In fall 1978, Belushi and Aykroyd moved the Blues Brothers — first seen on *SNL* on April 22 of that year — from live act to higher heights with the release of the live album *Briefcase Full of Blues*. With that, Belushi achieved an amazing hat trick: At one moment, *Blues* was the No. 1 selling record, *Animal House* was the highest-grossing comedy film of all time, and *SNL*, America's most influential show, had its highest ratings since it debuted.

"Since we began this film, I've been struck by that fact that he simultaneously had those milestones," says Cutler. "They were all different skill sets: sketch comedy, a comedy film in which he was playing a specific role, and a performance on *Briefcase Full of Blues* that was itself a kind of complex performance art piece."

"It was remarkable to have all that success," says Battsek. "Belushi was at the top of all the disciplines he was in, and that's something that's never been repeated again."

*Briefcase Full of Blues* was a huge success, and live performances sold out venues. "You see audiences in a state of ecstasy in the film, because that's how people responded to the Blues Brothers," says Cutler. "It was unbelievable, and it was a kind of this side job for John and Dan."

Adds Smith, “It’s hard to imagine today, when we have hundreds of television networks, so many movies opening every weekend, and musicians dropping new albums all the time. But to have all of his projects defining the culture in their own way is remarkable.”

Belushi’s style also set a standard. His *SNL* performances were a template for many of the next generation of sketch players; his *Animal House* persona was seen as Hollywood’s new key to the youth market; and his eventual turn towards more grounded portrayals paved the way for Bill Murray and Steve Martin’s similar transition. Even the epic scope of the *Blues Brothers* film would be a template by the middle of the ’80s.

“John was very much a bridge between the comedy of the ’70s and ’80s,” says Judy. “*The Blues Brothers* was shot in 1979, the year the album came out, but the film was released in 1980. He does connect those eras.”

Aykroyd worked on the script for *The Blues Brothers* in his and Belushi’s Holland Tunnel Blues Bar in New York’s Tribeca neighborhood. “At first they used the bar as a sort of office space, then we used it for *SNL* afterparties, which became boring as so many famous people showed up,” says Judy.

On film, Belushi’s performances got deeper. In 1979 he played Capt. “Wild” Bill Kelso, an obsessed American fighter pilot — an oversized role with very little dialogue — in Steven Spielberg’s World War II comedy *1941*. Though that big-budget Christmas release flopped at the U.S. box office, Belushi dug deep to give his slapstick character a grounding in reality.

“John really researched that role and was excited to do *1941*, because he had an uncle who was a war-hero pilot in the Pacific,” says Judy. “But it quickly became clear it was going to be *Animal House* shifted to another era.”

*The Blues Brothers*, however, was a hit in 1980, and the action-comedy-musical surrounded Belushi and Aykroyd with musical performances by legends including Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Ray Charles, John Lee Hooker, and Cab Calloway.

In 1981, Belushi switched gears again with the romantic comedy *Continental Divide*, earning critical praise for his portrayal of a cranky Chicago newsman (modeled on columnist Mike Royko) who goes to the Rocky mountains to escape a vendetta against his journalistic exposes, and winds up falling in love with a naturalist (played by Blair Brown). In his final film, *Neighbors*, from later that year, he and Aykroyd decided to swap roles, with Belushi playing the more straight-laced character. BELUSHI gives insight into his choices.

“When it came to acting, John’s hero was Brando,” says Cutler. “His aspirations to be a serious actor were very much part of who he was. I think he had three parts to his creative foundation — one as a comic performer, one as an actor, and one as a musician. And he worked equally hard to develop them all.”

### LASTING LEGACY

The intensity of Belushi’s last years — which, as discussed in the film, involved bringing in Smokey Wendell, a former bodyguard for Richard Nixon who acted as a kind of bulwark between Belushi and drugs — is described by his close friends in distraught, pained tones, and put into words by Belushi himself in letters. “John was not unaware of his risky behavior, and it frightened him at times,” says Judy.

Belushi did settle down as he and Judy bought their home on Martha’s Vineyard. Yet once Wendell left, Judy recalls, her concerns for his behavior grew. Interviews with Carrie Fisher at this point in BELUSHI illuminate the feelings and lack of coping skills that addiction brings with it.

On March 5, 1982, at age 33, Belushi overdosed on a mix of cocaine and heroin at the Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles. The loss reverberated across American culture, the entertainment world, and into the heart of his fans. “In the years after John died, you had such a sense of him not being there in the culture,” says Battsek.

“Judy talked us through when she found out he died, and I am so grateful to her for being brave

enough to do that,” Battsek adds.

In *BELUSHI*, however, the man who is heard describing himself as a “disciplined anarchist” is seen in full. The film looks at the discipline and the anarchy, at all sides of him and his talent, and how his deep love for those closest to him — even through the hardest of times — helped bring forth performances that continue to astound.

“I feel like there’s a continuing impact of him, even today,” says Battsek. “There were many high-profile comedians today who at various points checked in on our film with a great affection for John.”

“Ultimately, the story of John Belushi is the story of a great loss,” says Cutler, “but it’s even more a story of the great things he gave us all. And it turns out that the things John gave me when I was a 14-year-old boy watching *Saturday Night Live* on Long Island were consistent with all of the things he gave millions of people around the world, and the things he gave, most of all, to his nearest and dearest.”

“It’s tough to think that he was just beginning,” Cutler adds. “Yet this film quite intentionally focuses on his life — those years we had him, the years he lived.”

“John knew he had a power that was unique, though I think he never quite knew what it fully was, or what that meant. He was so different than anyone else,” says Judy.

“We got the time that we got with John,” she says, “but what we got, was pretty damn great.”

###

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

### **R.J. CUTLER (Writer-Director-Producer)**

R.J. Cutler is an award-winning director and producer who has made some of the most significant documentary films and television series of the past quarter century.

Cutler's feature documentaries include the Oscar-nominated *The War Room*, the Emmy-nominated *A Perfect Candidate*, the Sundance Award-winning *The September Issue*, the Peabody Award-winning *Listen to Me Marlon*, *The World According to Dick Cheney* and *Thin*. He has also been a pioneer in the area of non-fiction television, having created such landmark programs as "American High," (winner of the first Emmy Award for Outstanding Non-Fiction Television Series), "Freshman Diaries" and "30 Days."

Cutler's scripted work includes conceiving and directing "Nashville," directing the feature film *If I Stay* (starring Chloe Grace Moretz), and creating, writing, directing and producing the Webby Award-winning podcast *The Oval Office Tapes*.

Cutler's documentary series "Dear..." is currently streaming on Apple TV+. The series profiles subjects ranging from Spike Lee and Lin Manuel Miranda to Gloria Steinem and Misty Copeland, and tells their stories through the eyes of those who have been impacted most by their work. Upcoming projects include the feature documentary *BELUSHI*, which will premiere on Showtime in the fall, and the February 2021 Apple TV+ release, *Billie Eilish: The World's a Little Blurry*, an all-access intimate look at the last year in the life of the 18 year-old pop sensation who recently became only the second person in history to win all four major Grammy Awards in a single year. The scripted musical series "Bronzeville" (which Cutler executive produces alongside John Ridley, Alicia Keys, Benj Pasek, Justin Paul and Marc Platt) has been ordered straight-to-series by Showtime.

Cutler has been nominated for an Academy Award and numerous other awards, and he is the recipient of two Emmys, two Peabody Awards, a GLAAD Award, two Cinema Eye Awards, and two Television Academy Honor Awards. In 2009, the Museum of Television and Radio held a four-day retrospective of his work.

Cutler and his wife Jane live in Los Angeles with their daughter Madeleine, their son Maxwell, and their dog Dexter.



## **JOHN BATTSEK (Producer)**

John Battsek is one of the most successful producers in feature documentary filmmaking. Starting with Academy Award winning *One Day In September*, which Battsek conceived and produced, he has since been responsible for some of the most acclaimed documentaries in recent years.

Battsek's most notable credits include Academy Award® & BAFTA-winning *Searching For Sugar Man*, Academy Award®-nominated *Restrepo & Winter On Fire*, Primetime Emmy®-winning *Manhunt: The Story Of The Hunt For Bin Laden*, BAFTA winners *The Imposter* and *Hillsborough*, Grammy-nominee *Eric Clapton: Life In 12 Bars* and BAFTA nominated & Peabody winning *Listen To Me Marlon*.

His most recent credits include critically acclaimed *The Final Account* (Venice International Film Festival), *Rising Phoenix* (Netflix), Alex Gibney's *Citizen K* (Toronto International Film Festival), *Mike Wallace Is Here* (Sundance), Emmy nominated *Circus of Books* (Tribeca) & AACTA Award-winning *The Australian Dream* (Telluride & Toronto International Film Festival).

In 2020, Battsek launched his new production company Ventureland with long time PrettyBird collaborators Kerstin Emhoff, Ali Brown and Paul Hunter.

Battsek is currently in post-production on a range of titles including films about Sir Alex Ferguson and Charlie Chaplin.

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SHOWTIME DOCUMENTARY FILMS

PRESENTS

A PASSION PICTURES PRODUCTION

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

THIS MACHINE

AN R.J. CUTLER FILM

**BELUSHI**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BILL COUTURIÉ SEAN DANIEL VINNIE MALHOTRA ANDREW RUHEMANN

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY TREE ADAMS MUSIC SUPERVISOR LIZ GALLACHER

ANIMATION BY ROBERT VALLEY GRAPHICS BY STEFAN NADELMAN

STORY PRODUCER AUSTIN WILKIN CO-PRODUCERS RYAN GALLAGHER CAROLYNE JURRIAANS

EDITED BY JOE BESHENKOVSKY ACE EDITOR MARIS BERZINS

PRODUCED BY JOHN BATTSEK, p.g.a. R.J. CUTLER, p.g.a. DIANE BECKER, p.g.a. TREVOR SMITH, p.g.a.

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY R.J. CUTLER

SHOWTIME DOCUMENTARY FILMS

A Passion Pictures Film

In Association With This Machine

A Film By R.J. Cutler

**BELUSHI**

Written and Directed by  
R.J. CUTLER

Produced by  
JOHN BATTSEK, p.g.a.  
R.J. CUTLER, p.g.a.

Produced by  
DIANE BECKER, p.g.a.  
TREVOR SMITH, p.g.a.

Edited by  
JOE BESHENKOVSKY, ACE

Editor  
MARIS BERZINS

Animation by  
ROBERT VALLEY

Executive Producers  
BILL COUTURIÉ  
SEAN DANIEL  
VINNIE MALHOTRA  
ANDREW RUHEMANN

Co-Producers  
RYAN GALLAGHER  
CAROLYNE JURRIAANS

Story Producers  
AUSTIN WILKIN  
RYAN GALLAGHER

Original Music by  
TREE ADAMS

Music Supervisor  
LIZ GALLACHER

Graphics by  
STEFAN NADELMAN

Title Design by  
GARETH SMITH

Assistant Editors  
DAVID ARISTIZABAL  
REJH CABRERA

Music Editor  
CARL SEALOVE

Voice of John Belushi  
BILL HADER

Voice of Tony Hendra  
JOHN PURDIE

Archival Interviews by  
TANNER COLBY  
JUDY BELUSHI PISANO

Interviews With

MICHAEL APTED  
DAN AYKROYD  
ANNE BEATTS  
AGNES BELUSHI  
JIM BELUSHI  
JUDY BELUSHI PISANO  
MARIAN BELUSHI  
CANDICE BERGEN  
DICK BLASUCCI  
CHEVY CHASE  
JANE CURTIN  
SEAN DANIEL

TOM DAVIS  
GUS DIMAS  
CARRIE FISHER  
JIM FISHER  
JOE FLAHERTY  
PAUL FLAHERTY  
MITCH GLAZER  
TONY HENDRA  
TINO INSANA  
SEAN KELLY  
SUE KELLER

JOHN LANDIS  
PENNY MARSHALL  
BRUCE MCGILL  
LORNE MICHAELS  
CHRIS MILLER  
LAILA NABULSI  
DON NOVELLO  
DAN PAYNE  
HAROLD RAMIS

IVAN REITMAN  
EUGENIE ROSS-LEMING  
BERNIE SAHLINS  
TOM SCHILLER  
ROSIE SHUSTER  
MATTY SIMMONS  
BOB TISCHLER  
RICHARD ZANUCK  
ALAN ZWEIBEL

Archive Consultant  
BILLY BELUSHI

Research Assistant  
MARY CHIOCHIOS

Production Coordinator  
ANN ROGERS

Archive Coordinator  
CHRISTINE MELTON

Production Exec for Passion Pictures  
JESSICA LUDGROVE

Animation Producer  
ELLEN COLLINS

Animation Executive Producer  
DEBBIE CROSSCUP

Animation Coordinator  
SADE TAH

Animation Production Designer  
ROBERT VALLEY

2D Animation  
ANDY MCPHERSON  
DARYL GRAHAM  
ELEONORA QUARIO

After Effects Animation  
MARTIAL COULON

Animation Compositing  
JOHNNY STILL

Additional Animation Compositing  
JOHN TAYLOR

Animation Assistant Editors  
KINGSLEY BAILEY  
TIM KING

Production Sound Mixer  
THERESA RADKA

Additional Casting by  
CHANELLE DESAUTELS  
JOHANNA WEIRAUCH

HD Post Services

DIFFERENT BY DESIGN

Digital Intermediate  
DIFFERENT BY DESIGN

Digital Intermediate Colorist  
LUKE CAHILL

Online Editor  
ERIK CHOQUETTE

Digital Intermediate Producers  
MATT RADECKI  
GREG LANESEY

Archival Conversions  
JOE BOGDANOVIC

Post-Production Sound Services by  
SONY

Re-recording by  
Deluxe Hollywood

Supervising Sound Editors  
Richard E. Yawn  
Robert Getty

Re-Recording Mixer  
Elmo Ponsdomenech, CAS

Re-Recording Mix Technician  
Robert Young

Music Clearances  
DEBORAH MANNIS-GARDNER/DMG CLEARANCES

Production Accountants  
KENDRAH MATTHEWS  
BEN DAVIES

Production Legal Services  
RUSSELL SMITH  
DERMOT DESMOND  
SMITHDEHN LLP

Assistant to R.J. Cutler  
CHLOE SANDERS

Executive Producer

JODY KLEIN  
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1941 and NEIGHBORS Courtesy of Columbia Pictures  
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Alberto Rizzo

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Bonnie Schiffman

Bruce Kessler/RockinHouston.com

Carl Samrock  
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CNN

College of DuPage

Concert Vault, Bill Graham Archives

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Don Adkins

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Janis Hirsch

Jean Pigozzi

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Maddy Miller

Marcia Resnick

Marlene Iglitzen

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Peter Simon  
Producers Library  
Retro Video, Inc  
Richard E. Aaron/Redferns Collection via Getty Images  
Richard McCaffrey  
Rick Meyerowitz  
Robert Altman/Michael Ochs Archives via Getty Images  
Roger Collins  
Ron Galella, Ltd/Ron Galella Collection via Getty Images  
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The Associated Press  
The GoNightclubbing Archive, Pat Ivers and Emily Armstrong  
The Times-Picayune, 2/17/1977, Capital City Press/Georges Media Group, and Baton Rouge, LA  
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WBBM-TV  
WGN/Nexstar via Getty Images

Music

“I Can’t Turn You Loose”  
Written by Otis Redding  
Published by Wildwood Music Ltd.  
Performed by The Blues Brothers  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“Rubber Biscuit”  
Written by Charles Johnson, Nathaniel Epps, Paul Fulton, Samuel Strain, Shedrick  
Lincoln  
Published by EMI Longitude Music (BMI)  
Performed by The Chips  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“Hoop De Doo”  
Written by Milton Delugg and Frank Loesser

Published by Chester Music Limited trading as Campbell Connelly & Co; Frank Music Corp. and Amy Dee Music Corp. (ASCAP)  
Performed by Perry Como  
Courtesy of RCA Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment  
Licensed by Sony Music Entertainment UK Limited

"I'm A King Bee"  
Written by James Moore  
Published by Chester Music Limited trading as Campbell Connelly & Co  
Performed by The Rolling Stones  
Courtesy of ABKCO Music & Records, Inc.

"DOWN ON THE STREET"  
Written by Scott Asheton, James Osterberg, Ronald Asheton and David Alexander  
Published by BMG Rights Management UK Ltd., a BMG Company; Stooge-Staffel (BMI) and Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (BMI) All rights on behalf of itself and Stooge-Staffel administered by Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp.  
Performed by The Stooges  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

"Flight of the Phoenix"  
Written by Mark Farner  
Published by Cram-Renraff Co. (BMI), administered by Conexion  
Performed by Grand Funk Railroad  
Courtesy of Capitol Records LLC, Under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd

"DOMINO (LIVE)"  
Written by Van Morrison  
Published by Caledonia Soul Music (BMI) and WC Music Corp. (ASCAP)  
All rights administered by WC Music Corp.  
Performed by Van Morrison  
Courtesy of Exile Productions Ltd

"RAMBLIN' MAN"  
Written by Dickey Betts  
Published by Forrest Richard Betts Music (BMI) and Unichappell Music Inc. (BMI) All rights administered by Unichappell Music Inc.  
Performed by The Allman Brothers Band  
Courtesy of Mercury Records (US), Under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd

"Feelin' Alright"  
Written by Dave Mason  
Published by Universal/Island Music Ltd.  
Performed by Joe Cocker  
Courtesy of A&M Records Inc., Under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd  
Courtesy of Muscadet Productions, Inc.

"Think"  
Written by Aretha Franklin and Ted White  
Published by Fourteenth Hour Music/EMI Blackwood Music Inc.  
Performed by Aretha Franklin



Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“You Gotta Make It Through The World”

Written by Van Morrison

Published by BMG Rights Management UK Ltd., a BMG Company

Performed by Van Morrison

Courtesy of Exile Productions Ltd

"LET'S DANCE"

Written by Jim Lee

Published by Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (BMI)

Performed by Chris Montez

Courtesy of Monogram Recording

“Animal House”

Written by Stephen Bishop

Published by Universal/MCA Music Ltd.

Performed by Stephen Bishop

Courtesy of MCA Records Inc., Under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd

“(What A) Wonderful World”

Written by Sam Cooke, Herb Alpert & Lou Adler

Published by ABKCO Music, Inc.

Performed by Sam Cooke

Courtesy of ABKCO Music & Records, Inc.

“Shama Lama Ding Dong”

Written by Mark Davis

Published by Universal/MCA Music Ltd.

Performed by Lloyd Williams

Courtesy of Universal Pictures

“Louie Louie”

Written by Richard Berry

Published by EMI Longitude Music (BMI)

Performed by The Kingsmen

Courtesy of Kingsmen International Licensing Inc.

“She Caught The Katy and Left Me A Mule To Ride”

Written by James A. Rachell & Taj Mahal

Published by Big Toots Tunes/EMI Blackwood Music Inc (BMI)

Performed by The Blues Brothers

Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“Going Back Home”

Written by Son Seals, BMI

Published by Eyeball Music, BMI

Performed by Son Seals

Courtesy of Alligator Records

“Gimme Some Lovin”

Written by Steve Winwood, Muff Winwood, Spencer Davis  
Published by F.S. Music Ltd Administered by Kobalt Music Publishing Ltd and  
Universal/Island Music Ltd  
Performed by The Blues Brothers  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“B Movie Box Car Blues”

Written by Delbert Mc Clinton  
Published by Delbert McClinton Music (BMI)  
Performed by The Blues Brothers  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

"Flip, Flop & Fly" (Live Version)

Written by Charles Calhoun and Lou Turner  
Published by Unichappell Music Inc. (BMI)  
Performed by The Blues Brothers  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“No More”

Written by Gary McDaniel  
Published by Cesstone Music (BMI)  
Performed by Black Flag  
Courtesy of SST Records, Inc.

“I Remember Nothing”

Written by Ian Curtis, Peter Hook, Stephen Morris, Bernard Sumner  
Published by Universal Music Publishing Ltd.  
Performed by Joy Division  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

"GUILTY"

Written by Randy Newman  
Published by Randy Newman Music (ASCAP) and WC Music Corp. (ASCAP)  
All rights administered by WC Music Corp.  
Performed by The Blues Brothers  
Courtesy of Warner Music UK Ltd

“With A Little Help From My Friends”

Written By John Lennon and Paul McCartney  
Published by Sony/ATV Tunes LLC  
Performed by John Belushi

“The 2000 Pound Bee”

Written by Melvin Taylor and Don Wilson  
Published by EMI Unart Catalog Inc. and Universal Music Publishing Ltd.  
Performed by The Ventures  
Courtesy of Capitol Records LLC, Under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd

"Best Days"

Written and Performed by Judy Belushi Pisano

Courtesy of Judy Belushi Pisano

Special Thanks

GEORGE CHEEKS

LEE EASTMAN

JIMMY HOROWITZ

J.M. KENNY

TODD LUBIN

RONI LUBLINER

LORNE MICHAELS

JAY PETERSON

JEFF PIRTLE

WILLA SLAUGHTER

JACK SULLIVAN

ANTHONY WEISS

Very Special Thanks

JUDY BELUSHI PISANO

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