

## Flashback Interview: Judy Belushi on John, Before Chicago International Fest Premiere of 'Belushi'

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CHICAGO – The 56th Chicago International Film Festival will honor the town and one of its favorite sons on its Opening Night on Wednesday, October 14th, 2020. The premiere of the Showtime documentary “Belushi” is a chronicle of John Belushi, directed by R.J. Cutler. The film features reminiscences from familiar Belushi colleagues Dan Aykroyd, Chevy Chase, Lorne Michaels and his wife, Judy Belushi Pisano.

The former Judy Jacklin met John Belushi in high school in Wheaton, Illinois. Connecting profoundly, the couple went on the roller coaster ride of John's career (marrying along the way) from The Second City in Chicago to the original cast of “Saturday Night Live,” to the heights of movie stardom in such films as “Animal House” and “The Blues Brothers.” The documentary is a intuitive look into John Belushi's life, aided by Judy's insightful perspective, including the many separations the couple endured during John's runaway drug use and lost days as a result of his fame. John passed away in 1982 at age 33 due to a drug overdose.



Young John Belushi in a still from the Showtime Documentary 'Belushi'

*Photo credit: Showtime*

**Belushi Pisano:** Of course, there was certainly a desire for it to be big, but everybody on the set thought it was funny. John had a taste of success with 'Saturday Night Live,' but hadn't hit with his first film - 'Goin' South' - so when 'Animal House' took off, it was unbelievable.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Even though John was a national figure through ‘SNL,’ when the film exploded into a cultural phenomenon at the time, and John appeared on the cover of Newsweek, what kind of impact did it have on your marriage and John’s immediate family?

**Belushi Pisano:** His mother got a color television, and I got a new car. [laughs] This has been talked about before - he had the number one movie, the number one album [‘Briefcase Full of Blues’] and the number one late night show all at the same time. It was a heady time, although he didn’t need success to be heady, he was heady anyway. He was on a trajectory of fame that was difficult and yet expected, in a strange way.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You watched a loved one gain unprecedented fame. Besides the surface problems with John’s appetite for temptations, what type of insanity did the companion that you knew intimately fall into, regarding a shift in his perspective?

**Belushi Pisano:** We both grew a lot. I can equate it to immigrants moving from a foreign country to America. It was whole new world, and we had to learn about people - what to believe and who to trust. Hopefully, we could still trust each other, and that our instincts and sensibilities could stay in sync.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** You remarried and had children. What do they think about your show business history past? When they came of age were they curious about it, or did it just seem like ancient history not worth talking about?

**Belushi Pisano:** Neither. In some ways it was like my secret life, my double life. It’s known in my family, because my work overlaps with John so much. When my son was about three years old, I went and picked up a car from a repair garage. John’s picture was on the wall. My son exclaimed, ‘That’s my mommy’s husband.’ The guy in garage said, ‘your son has a great imagination.’ When there were talks on casting for a movie biography of John, my daughter looked at who they were thinking about and said, ‘well, they’re not sexy, and John is sexy!’ Oh, I felt a bit uncomfortable. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Okay, if you could go back in time back to high school in Wheaton, what would you tell the young Judy Jacklin to watch out for regarding John ... and what would you tell John to watch out for regarding Judy?

**Belushi Pisano:** Well, he already watched out for me, so I wouldn’t have to go that way. I don’t know about young Judy, maybe tell her to watch out for his propensity for illicit substances?

*The Opening Night Film for the 56th Chicago International Film Festival is “Belushi” on October 14th, 2020, at the ChiTown Movies Drive-In at 2343 South Throop Street, Chicago. The Festival runs October 14th to October 25th, 2020. [Click here](#) [22] for schedules and to purchase tickets.*



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