

John August Publicity Goals and Messages

Priorities

I never want it to feel like I'm campaigning for myself. I'm promoting the movie, and the script was a very important part of it.

I'd rather have one great story in the right place than ten good ones elsewhere.

What I want people to know:

Big Fish was written by John August, based on a book everyone thought was unadaptable.

What I want the media to hear about Big Fish:

- John found the book in manuscript form and brought it to the studio.
- John flew out to meet the book's author (Daniel Wallace) in Virginia and convinced him that there could be a movie.
- Very unusual for Hollywood, there were no producers or director involved for two-and-a-half years.
- John was the only writer during the entire five-year process.
- It was a very difficult adaptation. The book is a collection of tiny fables, without any conventional plot.
- The screenplay is nothing like the book. When people read the book after reading the script, they're bewildered and impressed.
- Almost half the characters in the movie don't exist in the book.
- John invited the author to read every draft.
- The author was so inspired, he became a screenwriter himself.

What I want the media to hear about my career and goals:

- John tries to balance between big and personal movies, art and commerce.
- It's much harder to get a drama made than a big action movie.
- John wrote both *Charlie's Angels* movies in the time it took to make *Big Fish*.
- John plans to eventually direct, but it's not his ultimate goal. His current career is.
- He'd rather be a great screenwriter than a mediocre director.
- Also, a director makes one movie a year; a screenwriter makes four.
- John wrote and produced a pilot that didn't get picked up for ABC. Had a good experience, but remains cautious with TV. Has no desire to run an empire.

What I'm good at:

- Questions-and-Answers with normal people.
- E-mail interviews and first-person articles (i.e. "John August writes about capturing the Southern accent.")
- Talking to writers conversationally, such as over food or beverage.
- Talking to geeks. (i.e. webmasters)
- Panels where I'm not the only center of attention.

What I suck at:

- Having my picture taken.
- Red carpets.
- Television.
- Being suddenly "on" when I'm not expecting it.
- Giving quippy answers on demand.

Journalists I'm friendly with:

- Jess Cagle. (Time)
- Michael Cieply. (LA Times and others)
- Andrew Murr. (Newsweek)
- Christine Spines. (Premiere)

Stuff you should know:

- The book's author, Daniel Wallace, is up for absolutely anything in terms of publicity. He's funny and Southern. We work well together, and should absolutely do some joint press.
- Sony has given me permission to publish the screenplay. My goal is to make it widely available as a .pdf file so absolutely anyone who wants to read it, can.
- I have a web site, johnaugust.com, which houses the screenwriting advice column I've been writing for the past three years.
- I'm currently writing a brand-new Tarzan movie for Warner Bros.
- I have good luck with former assistants. Rawson Thurber left when his "Terry Tate: Office Linebacker" commercials went national, and is about to direct a Ben Stiller movie for Fox. Dana Fox left three months ago when her script ("Something Borrowed") was bought and immediately put into production with Debra Messing.