

JOHN WESLEY: Biography/2010

JOHN WESLEY belongs to a “fraternity” of actors, rooted deeply in the American theatre with a strong educational background, stemming from a life-long history of activism, social reform and a tenacious respect for the Craft.

A consummate veteran of stage, television and film, as well as the United States Army, John (born John Wesley Houston), holds the distinct pleasure of having worked with some of the world’s finest performers and directors, from Denzel Washington to Albert Finney, Barbra Streisand to Tim Burton, James Earl Jones to Michael Apted, James Spader to Morgan Freeman...and the list goes on.

John Wesley received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of California, San Diego and his Bachelor of Arts Degrees from the University of San Diego, where he also majored in Political Science. These accomplishments, along with the wealth of talent, John has exemplified throughout his career, has often brought the student back as teacher, having returned to teach Master classes of Classical Theatre for the university.

For what distinguishes this classically-trained Actor is John’s gift to give. Forever indebted to his predecessors, J-Wes as he is apt to be called, loves actors; he loves to share, to wrestle, to dig deep into the young minds of actors and share his experiences. If not for the call of his own busy career, J-Wes might be Professor Wes. But like his service in the military, duty has called and continues to do so in various ways.

As the Artistic and Producing Director of The Southern California Black Repertory Company, he mounted a multitude of productions including Athol Fugard’s *Sizwe Banzi* and *The Island*, culminating in a three-year tour. Those productions led to an invitation to work with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. While at OSF, he performed in *Richard 2*, *Coriolanus*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

His broad and varied theatre experience includes Ionesco’s *Macbett* and Lillian Hellman’s *Toys in the Attic* at the Old Globe Theatre, which garnered him an Atlas Award for Best Supporting Actor. For the Mark Taper Forum, he appeared in both *An American Clock* by Arthur Miller and *Wild Oats*. At New York’s Geva Repertory Theater John was Toledo in August Wilson’s *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*. Other accolades followed, including the critically-acclaimed production of Oyamo’s *I Am A Man* which received an LA Weekly Award for Best Ensemble and for John, a Dramalogue Award for Best Supporting Actor. Most recently, John was part of the Los Angeles Ovation Award winning production of *Stick Fly*, which was recognized as Best Ensemble.

While at the Denver Theatre Center, John was hailed in the press as a “tour de force actor” when he captivated audiences with his “flawlessly interpreted” portrayal of Floyd ‘Schoolboy’ Barton in August Wilson’s *Seven Guitars*. He would return the following

season as Sam 'Doc' Thomas in Pearl Cleage's *Blues For An Alabama Sky*, and once again moved audiences with his portrayal of "Doub" in August Wilson's *Jitney*. At DTC, John would later play Steve in the all-Black production of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Once a "bit actor" early in his career, John would go from "bit" to "hit" when he was cast as a security guard in the smash hit *48 Hours*. From there his career would lead to more than 100 film and television movies. Select hits include *Missing in Action*, where the credits displayed "and introducing John Wesley", *Big Fish*, *The Wood*, and *Thirteenth Child*.

John Wesley has afforded us hours of laughter with television appearances on *Frasier*, *The Jefferson's*, *Benson* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*. And who can forget him as the irascible "Mr. Jim" the barber shop owner on *Martin* and the all-knowing janitor, "Willie" on *the Jamie Foxx Show*.

J-Wes then showed us the venerable tenants of his range in episodes of *JAG*, *Hill Street Blues*, and *In the Heat of the Night*, once again leaving us with memorable performances as the troublesome grocery store owner in the HBO cable film *Always Outnumbered* with Lawrence Fishburne, and of course the compassionate priest, on ABC's *the Practice*. Surely you caught John in Rob Lowe-driven *Lyon's Den* on NBC as the dignified and powerful Nigerian Ambassador and the take-no prisoners Judge on the NBC hit show, *Medium*. European audiences would remember his chilling performance in the Discovery Channel's docu-drama *9/11*.

Advertising officials, much like the rest of the Industry trust John. So much so, they've used him to sell everything...on-camera, that is. His is a familiar face, from *Microsoft*, *Foster Farms* and the *Holiday Inn*, to *Kia* cars and the satisfied patient for the *American Cancer Society*.

John Wesley has been a guest at the prestigious Robert Redford's Playwrights' Lab, where as an invited artist, he participated in play readings and assisted in the playwright's developmental process. He was also a part of the reading of *War Letters* under the auspices of the Sundance Lab at the Canon Theatre in Beverly Hills.

John attributes his success to God, good family values, as well as excellent training and hard work, and of course just plain old good luck.

JOHN WESLEY



SAG AFTRA AEA 5'11"

Geddes (323)-848-2700

FILM

WAY OF THE DOLPHIN
THE LEAST AMONG YOU
THE BELIEVERS
THE TWENTY
BIG FISH
THE 13TH CHILD
THE WOOD
THE LITTLE RASCALS
BORN YESTERDAY
STOP OR MY MOM WILL SHOOT
JACK'S BACK
MISSING IN ACTION II
NUTS
PERFECT
48 HOURS

Paradise Productions
Witenuckle Films, LLC
Warner Brothers
Independent
Columbia Pictures
Painted Zebra Production
MTV & BonaFide Films
Amblin Entertainment
Hollywood Pictures
Universal
Paramount
Cannon
Warner Brothers
Columbia
Paramount

d/ Michael Sellers
d/ Mark Young
d/ Daniel Myrick
d/ Chopper Bernet
d/ Tim Burton
d/ Tom Ashley
d/ Rick Famuyiwa
d/ Penelope Spheeris
d/ Luis Mandoki
d/ Roger Spottiswoode
d/ Alan Netter
d/ Lance Hoole
d/ Martin Ritt
d/ James Bridges
d/ Walter Hill

TELEVISION

AURORA BOREALIS
ALL OF US - UPN - **Recurring**
MEDIUM - NBC - **Recurring**
MARTIAL LAW - CBS - **Recurring**
DIRTY DANCING - CBS / Starred as Sweets Walker **Series Regular**
CHARLIE GRACE - ABC - **Recurring**
MARTIN - FOX - **Recurring**
IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT - NBC/CBS - **Recurring**
HANGIN' WITH MR. COOPER - ABC - **Recurring**
TRUST ME - TNT "All Hell the Victors"
CHOCOLATE NEWS - Comedy Central 2 Episodes
COLD CASE - CBS "Strange Fruit"
MEDICAL INVESTIGATION - NBC "Alienation"
THE PRACTICE - "Small Sacrifices"
WISEGUYS - CBS Pilot
FRASIER - NBC
LYON'S DEN - NBC "Pilot Episode"
JAMIE FOXX SHOW - WB "Writers Block"
ANY DAY NOW - Lifetime "Say Something"
JAG - CBS "The Martian-Baker Fan Club"
MELROSE PLACE - FOX
DREAM ON - HBO
FRESH PRINCE OF BEL-AIR - NBC
9/11: THE TWIN TOWERS - European Docudrama
REVELATIONS - NBC Mini-Series
ALWAYS OUTNUMBERED - HBO Cable Film
THE SECOND CIVIL WAR - HBO / Baltimore Pictures
THE COLONY - USA Network
THE COMPUTER WORE TENNIS SHOES - ABC MOW
COURTYARD - Showtime Telepicture
SINATRA - CBS Mini-Series
SWITCHED AT BIRTH - NBC Mini-Series
FAMILY OF SPIES - ABC Mini-Series
GO TOWARD THE LIGHT - CBS MOW
TOUGH LOVE - CBS MOW
LOVE LIVES ON - ABC MOW
ATLANTA CHILD MURDERS - ABC Mini-Series
QUARTERBACK PRINCESS - CBS MOW

d/ Matt Mayes
d/ Alfonso Ribeiro
d/ Vincent Misiano
d/ Jesus Trevino
P/ Steve Tisch
d/ Robert Singer
d/ Garren Keith
d/ Various
d/ Tony Singletary
d/ Michael Robin
P/ Fax Bahr, Adam Small
d/ Paris Barclay
d/ Marc Buckland
d/ Christina Musrey
d/ Rod Holcomb
d/ Cynthia Popp
d/ Rod Holcomb
d/ Shelley Jensen
d/ Elodie Keene
d/ Tony Wharmby
d/ Chip Chalmers
d/ Peter Baldwin
d/ Ellen Falcon
d/ Richard Dale
d/ David Semel
d/ Michael Apted
d/ Joe Dante
d/ Rob Hedron
d/ Payton Reed
d/ Fred Walton
d/ James Sadwith
d/ Waris Hussain
d/ Stephen Gyllenhaal
d/ Mike Robe
d/ Glenn Jordan
d/ Larry Peerce
d/ John Erman
d/ Noel Black

THEATRE

L.A. Theatre Works
Goodman Theatre
Berland Theatre at McCarter Theatre Centre
Denver Center for Performing Arts
Denver Center for Performing Arts
Denver Center for Performing Arts
Denver Center for Performing Arts
Fountain Theatre
GeVa Theatre, New York
Santa Monica Playhouse
Mark Taper Summer Repertory
Mark Taper Summer Repertory
Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Oregon Shakespeare Festival
Old Globe Theatre

THE JOURNEY TO JUSTICE
THE BALLAD OF EMMETT TIL
STICK FLY*
A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE
JITNEY
BLUES FOR AN ALABAMA SKY
SEVEN GUITARS
I AM A MAN**
MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM
SPLIT SECOND
AMERICAN CLOCK
WILD OATS
SIZWE BANSI IS DEAD
THE ISLAND
CORIOLANUS
TOYS IN THE ATTIC***

Louis Martin
Mose Wright / B.J. Washington
Joe LeVay
Steve
Doug
Sam "Doc" Thomas
Floyd Barton
Reverend Moore
Toledo
Parker
Clarence/Isaac
Desperado
Styles/Buntu
John
Sicinius Velutus
Henry Simpson

*Ovation Award, Best Ensemble **Dramalogue Award ***Atlas Award for Best Actor