

## John Singleton Gets 3 Movie Deal

Written by Robert ID746

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Paramount Pictures and MTV Films on Sunday said they signed director/producer John Singleton to a three-movie deal involving Sundance Film Festival title "Hustle & Flow" and two more low-budget films yet to be produced.

The unusual deal marks a new move by Paramount, which with MTV Films is part of media conglomerate Viacom Inc., into the arena for commercially oriented independent films where movie rights and marketing costs are low but profits may be high.

Last year, MTV Films and Fox Searchlight, a unit of News Corp. Ltd's 20th Century Fox, combined to release indie hit "Napoleon Dynamite," which earned \$44 million at U.S. and Canadian box offices. Paramount and MTV will be hoping to repeat that kind of success with "Hustle & Flow."

The new deal calls for Paramount and MTV to pay \$16 million for the three-movie package with \$9 million for global rights to distribute rap music film "Hustle & Flow" and \$3.5 million for each of the two other films, said a source near the deal.

The price appears to be a hefty one for a low-budget film when, in recent years, prices for movie rights at Sundance have generally run in the \$2 million to \$5 million range for top titles. The deal also is notable for the three-film package because most Sundance deals are for rights to only one movie.

But Rob Friedman, vice chairman of the Motion Picture Group at Viacom, said the involvement of Singleton, director of box office hits like "Shaft," and the relatively low marketing costs for independent movies made the price look right.

"The way we look at it is as a three-picture deal, and for those numbers, it's a very, very good price," he told Reuters.

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Friedman said Singleton would likely produce the two upcoming titles, but details had yet to be decided.

Neither he nor Dave Elder, executive vice president of MTV Films, would confirm the financial details of the deal.

Directed by Craig Brewer and produced by Singleton, "Hustle & Flow" tells the story of a pimp in a southern city who longs to get out of his business and sees rap music as his exit.

"Craig is a talented young director with a style and unique sensibility that we just fell in love with," Elder said.

Indeed, the movie has struck a nerve with audiences here at the Sundance Film Festival -- the top U.S. gathering for independent films. It has become one of the hot tickets in town.

[Source](#)