



“This will never work...”

Dwarves, giants, OAPs, coke-heads, and a jobbing carpenter. Twenty years ago, they were assembled in Hertfordshire by a man with a script no one could understand. Somehow they managed to create the greatest film ever made. This is their story.

It is 1976. Garth Pearce is a struggling 23-year-old film journalist, desperate for a story somebody – anybody – will pay him to publish. It's taken two decades. Here, finally, is his exclusive report from the set of *Star Wars*...

The good news is that I've been invited onto my very first film set. The bad news is that Sir Alec Guinness and Peter Cushing, the true stars of this "space adventure fantasy", called *The Star Wars*, are not prepared to be interviewed. Instead, I'm sold a tragic line-up by the desperate PR on the end of the phone. Let's see. We've got Mark Hamill, "the hero and a nice guy"; Dave Prowse, "the villain and a huge guy"; Harrison Ford, "the a-bit-quiet-and-boring guy". And Carrie Fisher: "You can have lunch with her, but she's kind of odd."

It doesn't, frankly, sound at all promising.

A few days later, at 10am on the morning of June 22, 1976, at Elstree Studios, Hertfordshire, it's already horribly apparent that this movie is going nowhere. It's hard to explain, but nothing looks quite right. Sci-fi movies have been in the doldrums for the best part of a decade, and everyone's looking distinctly uncomfortable. This is already officially the hottest summer in British history, and it's 80 degrees in the shade. The set seems messy and not even remotely high-tech. This could be an episode of *Dr Who*. What am I doing here?

And just when I'm thinking things can't get any worse, I hear Dave Prowse speak. He's dressed from head to foot in black to play 'Darth Vader' and, at 6ft 6in, looks like a giant. But he's speaking in this light, rolling Somerset accent, which makes him sound more like the proprietor of an isolated West Country village shop than an arch villain. He's 42 years old. He lived with his mum in Bristol until he was 28.

He has an openness that, in my naïvete, I assume he shares with everyone on the film. He's been bodybuilding since he was 17, when he started a Charles Atlas course.

"I got very interested with exercises and my mother thought I was going funny bringing home all these pictures of naked men," he recalls. "Instead, I found that once I started bodybuilding I couldn't stop."

He appeared in the Mister Universe contest of 1960 and won a British heavyweight weightlifting championship title in 1962. Since then, his career has fluctuated from playing Frankenstein in Hammer Horror movies to training the former Prime Minister, Edward Heath, at London's Grosvenor House Hotel.

"He's the only guy who I disliked intensely in public life," Dave tells me, "but found in private you couldn't meet a nicer person."

So how did he get involved in *The Star Wars*? "When they were casting, I was asked to come up for an interview. They offered me two parts: one, Chewbacca, a hairy gorilla, and the other a villain called Darth Vader. I said, 'Don't say any more – I'll take the villain.'"

Why?

"People always remember the baddie of the pictures. I just hope that no-one forgets who plays the baddie on this one, because I play him in a mask. Still, they are using my voice."

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"Oll Youl Get orf mol land":
The Dark Lord of the Sith
sends another party of
townles packing



I can do nothing about. No-one chooses their parents.

"To me, it's been a normal life. It's only when I compare what I've done with other people my age that I think maybe it's been different. And, of course, it has. When I was 13, I'd be making friends with people around 30 in the showbusiness scene."

A waiter interrupts us to say there's a phone call for her. Could she take it in the lobby? She's gone for ten minutes, and when she bounces back to the table, she's singing.

"Five foot-two, eyes of brown... It's like in those films where a phone call is arranged to impress someone," she says. "You know, 'Sir Laurence Olivier? No - I can-not work with you!'" She shrieks with manic laughter.

I'm quickly led away. Now it's time to meet Harrison Ford, known to the world as one of

is not one of them. Last year, owners EMI closed six of its nine stages and announced 213 redundancies, leaving a skeleton staff of just 48. The six films they've managed to get made here in the last 12 months include *Confessions Of A Driving Instructor* and *Stand Up Virgin Soldiers*.

On the set of *The Star Wars*, though, everyone is putting on a brave face. This is a new system, in which the studio offers freedom for independent producers to hire whom and what they like, including stages and offices, for any given amount of time. Since 20th Century Fox had booked the whole studio for 18 weeks, Elstree is pinning its hopes on the heroes and villains of *The Star Wars* to rescue it from impending financial disaster.

My feelings of foreboding aren't helped by seeing Mark Hamill, 24, playing a character called Luke Skywalker. His cv includes a role in the American soap *General Hospital*, and he looks about 12. As he strides over to me, he's still burbling after his first meeting with Sir Alec Guinness.

"I've been, like, on pins and needles around here, waiting to see the great man," he says. "I asked him if there was anything I should go and see in the West End of London. I fully expected him to say there was a four-and-a-half hour version of *Coriolanus* or something.

"And he said, *Housewife Superstar*. I did, and was appalled and delighted by Barry Humphries. It was a perfect example of how Sir Alec really is - so unpretentious. A real star."

Exactly. A real star I won't be interviewing.

Hamill is also enthusiastic about his co-star, Carrie Fisher, with whom there are rumours of a romance. All I know about her is that she's Debbie Reynolds' daughter.

"I have to keep on reminding myself she's only 19," says Hamill. "She seems so mature and I feel younger, emotionally. What a life she's led. Her best friends seem to be the chorus members of *No No Nanette*, or whatever her mother did for a revival on Broadway."

Mark's life has been a little mixed-up too.

"As a child, I was moved across America 3,000 miles at a time from New York to San Diego," he



This could be an episode of Dr Who. Why am I here?

says. "I just wanted to fit in. On the East coast, you wear loafers and sweaters. In California it's Levi's and tennis shoes."

So is *The Star Wars* going to transform his life?

"I'm playing the juvenile lead in a fantasy," he says, reality caving in on him suddenly. "And I know I look young, because I'm being offered the part of teenage virgins all the time. But... Well, you never know. And, whatever, we all get along great. Carrie, Harrison and I always share a car to and from the studio each day."

A lackey approaches to tell me that I'm to have lunch with Carrie Fisher. The hand-out I've been given describes her as "kooky", but to my untrained eye this appears to be a euphemism for "deranged". A brief mention in gossip columns earlier in the year had her down as the "preocious" daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher; her mother has been twice divorced and her father is on his fourth wife.

Sitting down, she eats melon and sips a Coke.

"Maybe I'll get on to alcohol when I grow up," she laughs. Twice, she bounds up enthusiastically from the table to "go to the bathroom". Perhaps she has a summer cold coming on...

"If I wasn't Debbie Reynolds' daughter, I'd probably make cracks about the girl who was," she says in an I'm-levelling-with-you-now voice. "People expect me to be very spoilt, sophisticated and have a lot of advantages. It's just a situation

the guys from *American Graffiti*. No matter how hard I try, I seem unable to get a smile from Harrison. What sort of name is that anyway? And he's playing someone called...? "Han Solo." Hmm.

"My character in this is the voice of reason, the voice of the public," he intones earnestly. "I took it because it's a good story and there is a chance to work with Sir Alec. He's something of a legend."

I know. I'd love to be able to interview him.

Later, a couple of crew members volunteer that Ford is their favourite personality on the set. He'd been taking an interest in the work of the sparks and the chippies, and is always ready with a word and a greeting. It turns out that he'd been working as a carpenter in LA until only a few weeks before. Ford himself doesn't tell me any of this.

All I want to do is to get away from him quickly. Who is this serious American, with long sideburns and a sloping face, who looks like he'd rather be anywhere but Elstree? Considering he's 34, he's pretty vague about what he's been up to.

"Quite a few films and TV parts, which I guess you won't know," he says, accurately. "But this is the best film and crew I've ever worked with. I have high hopes of something special."

Some chance. A softly-spoken yokel body-builder, a choirboy, a spoilt little rich girl and a nobody actor, all toiling in the 80 degree heat at a washed-up studio. Who's kidding who? Sir Alec must have lost his marbles. **N**



AQUARIUS(3), KOEHL(3), RONALD GRANT(1), CORBIS/EVERETT(1), SB INTERNATIONAL(1)

NOT VADER WAY

Everyone from Sir Alec Guinness to Bill Hootkins remembers the greatest movie they ever made

MARK HAMILL

Luke Skywalker



I didn't even read the script until after I got the part, but I loved it immediately. People find that hard to believe, because they see the film and all the special effects and they can't imagine that you could get a feeling for it on the printed page. But it was all there: the humour, the romance. I was delighted. It smacked much more of the Brothers Grimm than it did of Isaac Asimov.

For the whole thing my eyes were just so wide open. I loved seeing all the different departments at work - the art department, the model-makers. Even after the live action was finished, they'd call me and say, "Hey, we're going to blow up the Death Star today, if you want to come and watch!" When I got the chance I'd go along.

When Carrie and I did the swing across the chasm on the Death Star I was disappointed that they had so many cameras going that we only had to do it once. We were both on harnesses, and after they unhooked Carrie I said I'd like to have done a few more takes. Of course, that was the cue for the wire guy to haul me up and fly me around the sound stage. Then they called "Lunch" and left me hanging 30ft in the air.

Harrison, Carrie and I were closest on the first film. By the time we did the second and third there were various wives and boyfriends and managers and separate cars, whereas on *Star Wars* we were all footloose and fancy-free. We still got on during the shooting of the other movies, we just didn't see each other as much. I haven't seen Harrison or Carrie for a while. I still send Sir Alec a Christmas card and he always writes back, and if I'm in London I'll go and see any play he's in.

Some *Star Wars* fans know way more about it than I do. They ask me questions about the hardware and I forget what certain things were called. When George told me he was going to do a technical upgrade on the movie, he said, "Do you remember the Dewbacks?" I remembered the word but I couldn't remember what it was - it's actually the lizard thing the Stormtroopers ride, and he was all excited because now, instead of just being a rubber thing whose head moves up and down, it was going to walk around and drink water out of a trough.

It was very strange to see little plastic figures of ourselves everywhere. It still is. I still have the Stormtrooper helmet that I rescued the Princess in, and I've kept various bits of the costume as the series went on. And I think I've got a lightsabre somewhere around the house. If my son were here he'd know. He works part-time at a science-fiction toy shop, so he knows what I've got. By the way, those pants I wore were just bleached Levi's with the tag still in them.

HARRISON FORD

Han Solo



The only feeling I have about the re-release of *Star Wars* is a sense of dread of having 20-year old acting exposed again - having already been paid to humiliate myself and then having to see it again re-released. No, I think I haven't seen it in 20 years, and I haven't seen the new one, although George wants to show it to me some time before it opens. From what I hear, the reaction to the trailer in theatres is fantastic.

CARRIE FISHER

Princess Leia Organa



It was fun. I was just a 19-year-old kid. I went into the first one thinking, "I'd like to have an affair, I've never really had one." I was the only chick, so I had a really good choice, but I'm keeping that one to myself. There's one shot of me bumbling along after we had been victorious with the Death Star, and my breasts are all very excited. They were tending to distract attention from the action. There were certain times when you'd see them behind the camera staring and it had to be my breasts... it was never the boys' genitalia bouncing up and down. So they had to be taped to my chest. There are no bras in space. Ask George Lucas.

The worst thing was the *Star Wars* shampoo where they twist off your head and pour liquid out of your neck - "Lather up with Leia and feel like a Princess yourself". I didn't like some of the action figures much, either. One of them makes me look like Eddie Munster.

ALEC GUINNESS

Obi-Wan Ben Kenobi



Like all the best directors, Lucas had very little to say during the actual filming. He simply sensed when you were uncomfortable and just walked across and dropped a brief word in your ear. It was almost like being on stage. Good actors don't like being told how to act, and they become worried if they are made to feel merely part of someone else's work. In this total concentration, in his reliance on both his eye and his ear, he reminded me of the young David Lean. I always had the feeling that, like Lean, deep down he was totally involved in the action. Of course there was none of the Lean star-quality, the hush when the director is on set, but there was the sensation that life can only be a piece of celluloid.

ANTHONY DANIELS

C-3PO



It was torture. My suit was made of thick plastic and heavy glass fibre. Working in that heat under those arc lights nearly finished me off. Every time I moved, that suit pinched me somewhere, and I rattled as I walked, which sent the sound technicians crazy. I could only walk stiffly and kept bumping into the other actors because I could

only see straight ahead. When I had the arms fixed on I couldn't even scratch or feed myself. Even worse, it was impossible to go to the toilet. I just had to put my mind on higher things.

KENNY BAKER

The man inside R2-D2



George Lucas came to London to do this film at Elstree. They'd made this Robot, R2-D2, and they'd made it small because Carrie Fisher was only small and Mark Hamill was only small - well, relatively small. My agent sent me down, they looked at me and said, "He'll do," and I was in. They just wanted to see if I was the right size. At the time I couldn't just take off because I was part of a double act called The Mini-Tones and we were doing Hughie Green's *Opportunity Knocks* on TV and I didn't really want to be stuck in a robot. So I said, "I'll help you out if I can," and turned it down, but they kept coming round my house, trying to persuade me to do it.

When we got to shooting I couldn't understand what it was all about, to be honest. All these weird and wonderful names - Obi-Wan Kenobi and all that. I thought it was a load of rubbish at first. But then I thought, "Well, if Alec Guinness is in it he must know what's going on."

It was very exciting. We went to Tunisia and Arizona and California. Harrison was a nice, quiet softly spoken kind of chap. George was a nice guy. Carrie Fisher was a bit spaced out most of the time. Very nice, though. People were dabbling around with drugs and things in those days. And smoking pot. Alec Guinness and Peter Cushing would never do *anything* like that.

I didn't really see much of Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) off the set because it took him so long to get in and out of his costume. I was doing cabaret in the evening. Mark Hamill used to come to a couple of clubs and watch us when we were working around Stevenage. He used to enjoy having a drink and watching the show. They had a big end-of-show party and we did the cabaret, me and Jack my partner. At the end we did a cowboy and Indian mime routine. I think George Lucas liked it.

PETER MAYHEW

Chewbacca



The previous film I'd done was *Sinbad and The Eye Of The Tiger*. I'd played the Minotaur, a man's body with a bull's head, which was about 8ft tall, all made out of fibreglass. After that, wearing costumes was relatively easy. It was really my height that got me the Chewbacca job, and the fact that I'm fairly agile for a big guy. I'm 7ft 3in



"They just wanted to see if I was the right size"

Peter Mayhew

tall, and Chewbacca was 8ft. The rest was made up by a couple of inches on the shoes, and the headgear, which was probably three or four inches above my head.

We talked about what the character could and couldn't do, it was about a 20-minute interview and that was it. The only thing that was laid down was that Chewie couldn't talk. He could react to people, he could understand, but he couldn't talk. Most of his voice was redubbed after shooting, although I had to make noises at the time to get reactions from the other actors. It all went back to California and was redubbed. If you think about it, he's half-monkey, half-bear, so his higher notes are pleasure notes and the lower notes are anger.

I remember the trash-masher scene. It was basically a pit with loads of polystyrene, oil, muck and water, and it stunk. The costume was mohair, and if you got it wet it made it worse to wear. I found myself a 4in plank at the back of the set, stood on that, did my bit and everybody seemed perfectly satisfied. Mark and the rest were getting covered in water, and I just stood at the back laughing.

I don't know if Chewie's in the next three films or not. When you think that he's something like two or three hundred years old, depending on how far back they go, he could be around. I guess he'd be similar to the old Chewie. But smaller.

DAVE PROWSE

Darth Vader, Dark Lord Of The Sith



I met George Lucas in Fox's offices in Soho Square. I thought he looked like a bit of a student. Anyway, he said, "I'm doing this film called *Star Wars* and I'd like to offer you one of two parts." Which was all right, two parts straight away without even having to read or act or anything.

I asked him how he knew me and he said, "I saw you in *A Clockwork Orange*; if you're good enough for Stanley Kubrick, you're good enough for me." When I asked him what the two parts were he said, "One's called Chewbacca, which is like a hairy gorilla who goes through the film on the side of the goodies." I thought, sod that; three months in gorilla suit. He said the other was the big villain of the film. So I said, "Right, I'll have that, thank you very much." To which he said, "You've made a wise choice. No-one will ever forget Darth Vader." Without a doubt, Darth Vader became the cult figure of the film. Now he's regarded as the ultimate screen villain of all time. And that was me!

At the time, there was no indication that it was going to be a major film. The only thing you could say was there was loads of money being spent. Elstree was a ten- or 12-studio lot, and it was all taken up with *Star Wars*. They built a full-size Millennium Falcon and everything.

The filming was fraught with problems. I kept



"I don't know what happened to Mark Hamill"

Shelagh Fraser

asking George about Darth Vader's voice. Obviously, everything I was saying was coming through the mask and was therefore no good for reproduction purposes. George kept saying, "Don't worry, we'll re-record all your lines at the end of the film."

Anyway, *Star Wars* came out in America in May 1977 in a huge blaze of publicity. We hadn't seen any rushes or anything. Out of the blue I got a cable from Russ Meyer, the film director, and he'd written, "Congratulations, you're in the biggest film of all time. And, by the way, did you know they've overdubbed your voice?" I was very disappointed. Of course, when the film was finished they'd raced back to America and decided that they couldn't play Darth Vader with an English accent. Perhaps it was my Bristol accent.

They probably didn't want Darth Vader walking into a scene and going, "All right, moi dears."

DON HENDERSON

General Taggi



One day Peter Cushing had the wrong boots sent to the set and the only thing that would fit him were these red pom-pom slippers. It was like playing a scene with a bare-breasted woman – you try and look her in the eyes but you can still see her chest. So he was storming around in this fascist costume being horrible and nasty, while we had enormous difficulty keeping a straight face.

It was a shame that Dave Prowse was dubbed over, but you can't really be an intergalactic space tyrant with a soft Bristol accent. Whenever he spoke, the helmet muffled his voice, and in fact the only thing you could hear clearly was, "Fook it. Oi've droyed," when he forgot his lines. You could see Lucas chewing his nails, but he never told Dave not to bother because he'd have just lost interest. Four years after shooting finished, I took my son to see it, by which time I'd forgotten that I'd done it. When my first scene appeared, he stood up and shouted, "That's my Daddy!" He was so cross I hadn't told him I was in *Star Wars* that I had to say I'd been keeping it as a special surprise.

JAMES EARL JONES

The voice of Lord Darth Vader



I just got lucky. The legend is that George Lucas was thinking about using Orson Welles, but decided that his voice was too recognisable. So he chose the voice of a kid born in Mississippi. They wanted a symbolically dark voice, but I thought I was a strange choice because I'm a stutterer. In fact, my



Laser, laser, shooting, shooting: an X-Wing pilot repays Darth Vader for cutting him up at that mini-roundabout

stutter was so bad that I was totally mute between the ages of six and 14. Luckily, Marlon Brando made stuttering the way Americans talk, so I get away with a lot now.

For all three films I was really just special effects, so I never visited any sets or even met David Prowse. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, the director Irvin Kershner recorded Darth Vader's voice for the rough-cut. I tell you, he had this really scratchy high-pitched voice, but his Vader was much scarier than David's. Or mine.

Darth Vader was a composite of five people. There was David, me, someone who did the battle scenes, someone who did all the wheezing, and the actor whose face was revealed at the end. For me, the whole thing was like Greek acting, where you've got a mask on and behind that you can just freak out. Children still ask me to do lines, but I usually don't know what they're talking about. I can't remember any of them.

I met George Lucas out in Idaho recently. I asked him whether I'll get to work on the new trilogy. He said that the young Anakin Skywalker sounds nothing like me, but when Darth Vader becomes bionic at the end of the third episode, then I get to work. I was very happy to hear that.

SHELAGH FRASER

Luke Skywalker's ill-fated Aunt Beru




I arrived in Tunisia for the Tatooine desert scenes, and while I was waiting for the location manager I thought I'd go and have a look around the seaport. All down the quayside there were these endless young boys of 12 or 14 asking anybody of any age or sex to pay them for, well, whatever you wanted. Apparently with the encouragement of their families. It was extraordinary.

George Lucas and Gary Kurtz found that the wandering tribes dig large holes deep in the sand for one-night stopovers. They had a basic dormitory with an unspeakable lavatory we had to use. We shot our scenes in one of these, which I think gave it an otherworldly quality. I got on well with

Mark Hamill, but I think he decided to give up the business and live on Malibu beach with his girlfriend. I don't know what happened to him, but I think he eventually got bored.

BILL HOOTKINS

Doomed X-Wing pilot Porkins (Red Six)



When I first saw the script I thought "God, only brain-damaged 12-year-olds are gonna like this shit." Then I went along to the cast and crew screening - I saw that opening shot, and went, "Fuuuuuck." Being cast as Porkins - I thought, because of my generous figure, there might be some hidden meaning there. Then I saw some stills of the bar scene with all this extraordinary make-up and thought, "Jesus, is somebody going to come over and stick a snout on my face?"

The sequences I shot were done on the hottest day in English history. The sole reason we're wearing yellow visors is so you can't see the sweat pouring down our faces. We only had one X-Wing, which was repainted between shots. If you'd seen the four hairy guys in T-shirts that were pushing it around and making it shake in front of a blue screen you'd have thought, "What's this, some amateur movie?" Then all the pilots complained that none of the buttons in the cockpit worked, so they attached a six-quad calculator to the camera housing. When we were flying, all we were doing was two plus two equals four.

RICHARD LE PARMENTIER

General Motti

I'd just done a couple of episodes of *Space 1999*, and *Star Wars* looked like just another non-descript science-fiction movie. I went to LA to an

audition, where everyone read the Han Solo part. Brian De Palma was poaching from the casting session, so I got offered *Carrie*, which I ended up not doing. *Star Wars* came back about a month later and said I could be an Admiral, which was a week's work. I was only an Admiral until I went to the costume fitting, where I became a General, because that was the only uniform that would fit. On set, there were all these extras continually being made-up and wheeled in front of George Lucas to be approved for the bar scene.

I go to quite a lot of these conventions now. They fly you first-class to some bizarre place in North Carolina, put you in a Holiday Inn and give you a thousand dollars. You just have to talk to these guys in anoraks for a couple of days. It's great.

STEVE GAWLEY

Model builder

We were just young, energetic folk working on a whole new kind of film project. It was my first film and I thought that all films were like that. It was made during a simpler time: not so much technology, and much less money.

My friends just couldn't believe I had this job building spaceships. We saw George Lucas occasionally. He came down to do some work on the models, and he was just like one of the guys: he wore tennis shoes like us, and he was really easy to talk to. It was a big surprise when we saw the film - I couldn't believe that I had actually worked on the picture. It was one of those days that you always remember. I was really proud, and really pleased for George.

DAN O'BANNON

Animator

In order to get the film completed in time, Lucas scoured the basements of Los Angeles for any-

body to farm out bits and pieces of effects to. He'd seen *Dark Star* and that had a number of display-type screens on consoles in the spaceship, so he thought I could do the same thing for *Star Wars*. At the time, computer displays for targeting were not common; they were only used by the military, and in *Dark Star* I had completely faked it.

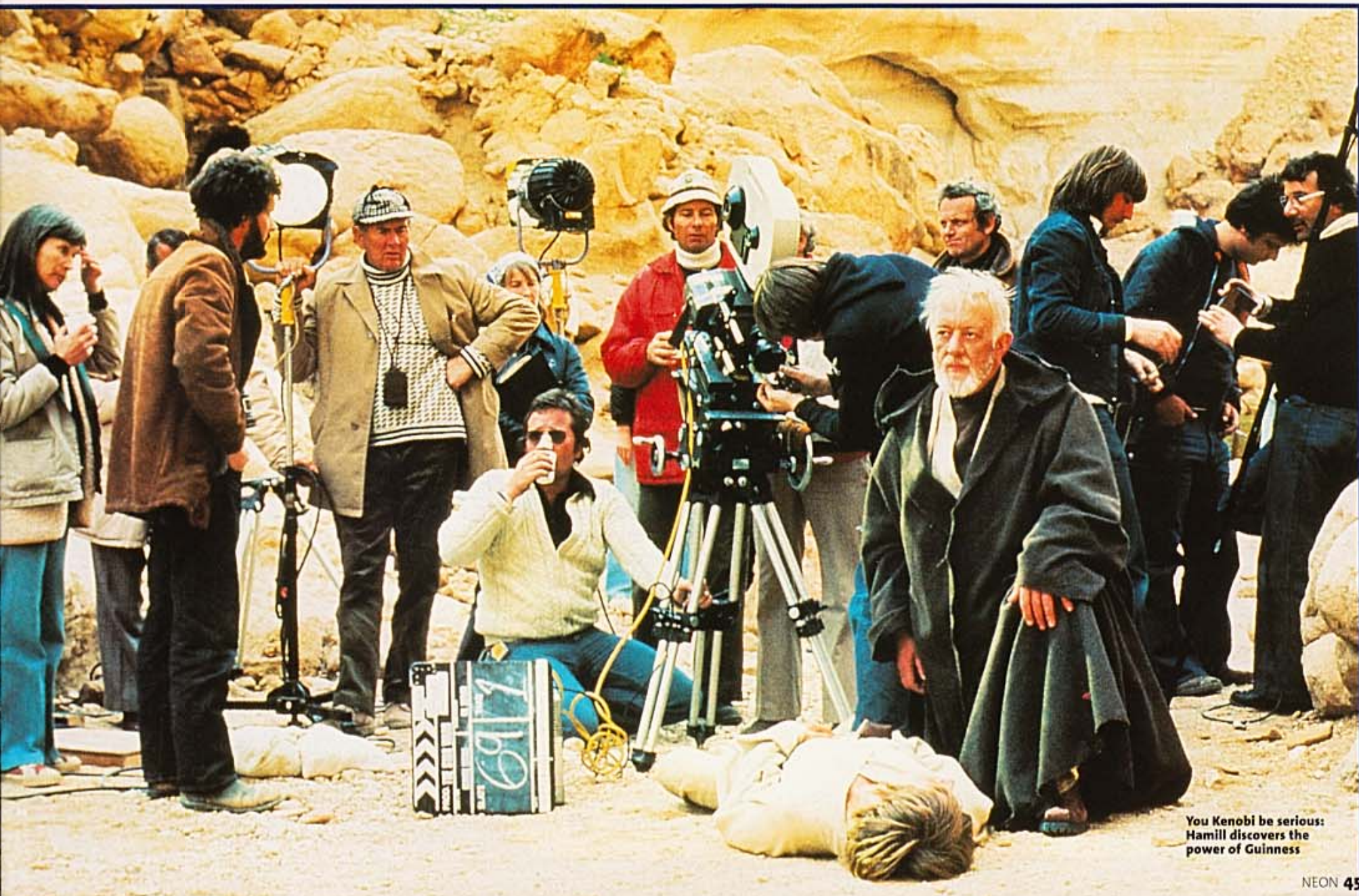
When I met Lucas, my impression of him was that he was very tired. He flew me up to his mountain-top Xanadu and ran some scenes from the picture for me. I was very impressed; it was going to be a great movie. He told me what he needed, and gave me a dozen shots to do.

At that time, cinematic computer labs were only just beginning to be available. All the stuff we couldn't do with analogue computers we had to do with traditional animation. At ILM I was trying to figure out how to do the screens, because we had to have the Imperial fighters targeting the good guys, and vice versa. So we borrowed one model of each fighter and used Polaroids to photograph them from every conceivable angle, and animated them ghosting around on the targeting devices.

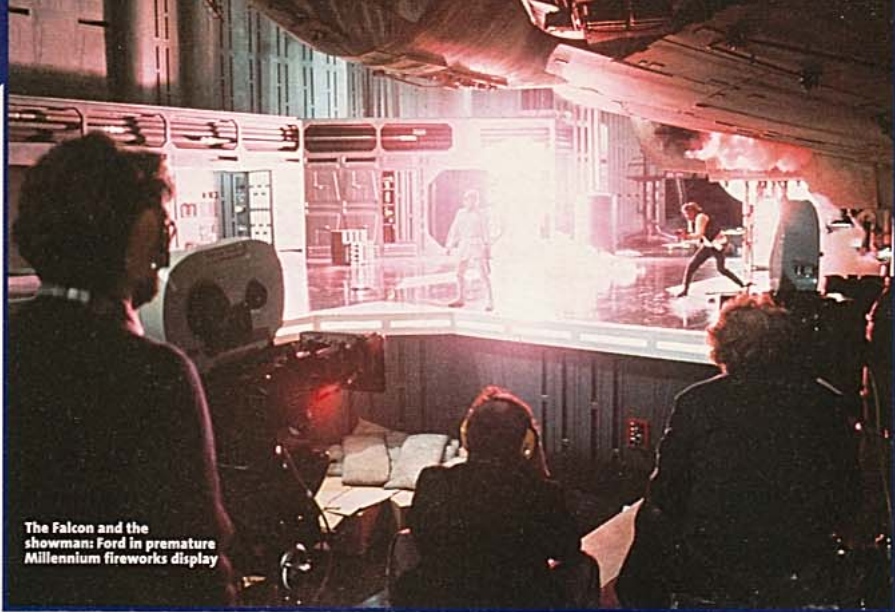
Lucas flew down once a week in his helicopter, and everyone would hand in their little pieces of film and he would give his comments. Just as I had finished the last bit of work, he said, "Your footage is the most colourful in the film," and he did not sound pleased. I said, "Do you mean garish?" and he didn't say anything, but he desaturated all my colours in the finished film.

I don't think George Lucas likes me. In the years right after, he was not responsive when I tried to contact him, so I gave up. I read an interview with him where he said that he didn't want big egos working around him - there's only room for one big ego in a George Lucas picture, and I put two and two together. So he isn't rushing to my birthday party.

I still think *Star Wars* is a terrific movie, but since then I have taken very little interest in targeting devices. →



You Kenobi be serious: Hamill discovers the power of Guinness



The Falcon and the showman: Ford in premature Millennium fireworks display

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Creator

The films were always intended to be timeless stories. They were based on mythological ideas that had been around for thousands of years and the subject matter, and the issues they're dealing with, I think, are timeless. That's part of the reason they still seem to be as popular now as they were 15, 20 years ago. I was amazed at how it was accepted all over the world. Wherever I go, it's penetrated the local culture, and I've been to some pretty obscure places. To me, it was very revealing of how popular culture gets everywhere you can possibly imagine on this planet.

In the first three films I was trying to make a modern mythology, where you take the values and the social mores that exist today and put them in a form that you can express to younger people. The film was really aimed at 12-13-year-olds, though it seems that everyone

from all ages has enjoyed it. The next three movies I'm writing right now take place before the original trilogy and really they are to do with the rise of Darth Vader. It's his story. Obi Wan Kenobi and everyone is in it, but it's these characters many years before, and how they came to be the way they are today.

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Death Stars in their eyes

What does Irvine Welsh like about *Star Wars*? Why does the Spice Girls' Geri think space is like Inverness? And what are these two feckers playing at?

FATHER TED

Priest in exile

I'm a huge fan of the film. Not one moment goes by in the day when I'm not thinking about Han Solo, Chewbacca, the woman and the other man and the man with the beard. Interesting story, actually, but Father Jack seems to be able to understand both the squeaky robot and Chewbacca. Every time Chewbacca says something, Father Jack laughs and shakes his head in admiration. I think we're losing a lot of the humour in translation.

It's a very, very good film. I can't understand why they didn't make any sequels. I first saw it at an afternoon screening in Wexford and there were loads of children shouting and jumping all over the place and generally having a bit of a laugh. It was impossible to hear anything. But even though you couldn't make out any of the dialogue, the story was so powerful that you could still follow it. You knew instinctively that everyone on the *Battlestar Galactica* were the good guys and everyone else wasn't.

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Life on other planets? Well, the latest evidence from Mars suggests that there is definitely life on other planets besides Earth (*Ted: No it doesn't...*) so I suppose, why not? But would they all have their own God? Or would he be the same fella? Best not to think about it too much. You could go a bit mad. →



"It's a very good film. I can't understand why they didn't do any sequels" Father Ted

The Gospel according to St Luke: That would be an astronomical matter...

May the farce be with you

Five 'tributes' to the magic of *Star Wars*

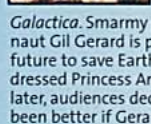


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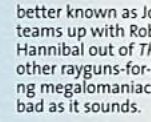


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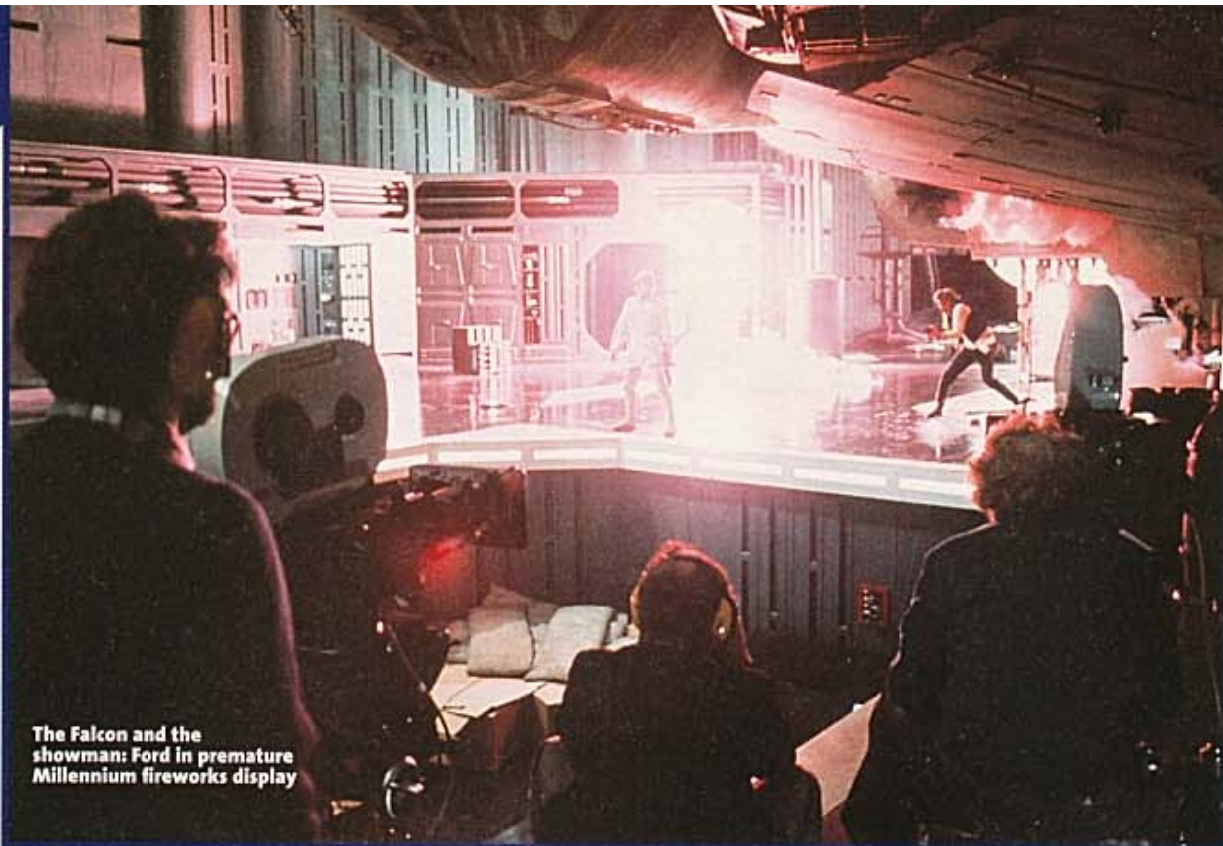
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ADRIAN GREEN(1), RONALD GRANT(3), SB INTERNATIONAL(1), KOSBA(2)



IRVINE WELSH
Aye bollocks get yer eckies oot, etc

Star Wars: one of the all-time greats. Being a contrary bastard, I resolutely avoided watching it until all the hype had blown over. Then I watched the video at my pal Errol's two or three times. I loved

it, and spent most of the '80s holed up watching the trilogy. The classic confrontation between Skywalker and Vader at the end of *Return Of The Jedi* is probably my favourite scene, but it's hard to say. Darth Vader and Jabba The Hut both remind me of a couple of good pals of mine in both looks and behaviour. As those people are still mates of mine, I'd better not name them. *Trainspotting* was probably more influenced by *Star Wars* than by any other piece of art. Then again, that might be bullshit...



PHIL JUPITUS
Jabba-esque comedian

I saw it on the first Saturday it went on regional release. It'd been on in London for a fortnight before they showed it to the proles, after our urban friends had sucked on it for a couple of weeks. It was 1978 and I was taking my O levels, so I felt a bit Luke. Every disco I ever went to I felt a bit Luke. As you get older, your favourite character changes. There's that dodgy two-week period when it's Leia, but then you move onto Han as you get more set in your ways and bullish. There are those times in life when nobody knows what you're on about: those are the Chewbacca years.

I always thought Chewbacca was gay. He was big and hairy and he wore a lot of leather. I can easily imagine him striding manfully out of the

London Apprentice with a little set of keys jangling off his enormous bandolier. About 18 months ago I did Chewbacca at the Comedy Store, just for a laugh, and ended up doing a one-hour Edinburgh show. I know I've tapped into a certain element of popular culture, because those bastards at Tunes nicked the premise for the Darth Vader advert. I can't prove it. I might have to go round there with two friends from Dagenham to give those twats an old-style East End talking to.



TIM BURGESS
Charlatans singer, young Jedi

I mostly like the first film, especially when they was trapped in the shaft that was closing in on them. Harrison Ford was always my favourite 'cos he was the hero, and Princess Leia, 'cos I fancied her. I

got the trilogy last Christmas, but I think they got worse after the original. They got into that furry animal stuff, which was a bit too cute. I always wanted a Stormtrooper mask, but I think you can only get them in Japan now. You can get them here? Oh wow, I'll have to buy one. That'll probably be the cover for our new single.



GERI
Spice Girl

I saw it when I was about seven, at Christmas, something like that. My older brother took me along. It was the special effects that made an impact - pure escapism. I was into *Star Trek* at the time. I know what this'll sound

like, but I do believe it's really arrogant for human beings to think they're the only thing in the universe. I mean, the Earth is probably like

Inverness or something. Inverness is in Britain, right? So, Earth probably has the same relationship to the rest of the universe.

I always liked Princess Leia, of course - she definitely had girl power - but the best part of all of the films is when Darth Vader tells Luke he's his father. It gave it a bit of drama, and I'm a drama queen. And I liked R2-D2. Why? Because even though he didn't speak our language, he meant what he said.



JAMES LAVELLE
Dark Emperor of Mo'Wax Records

I was only three when the film came out, so I first saw it on video in 1980. I pretty much bought all the merchandise that came out here at the time, but now I've got a lot more rare stuff from America.

I've got a speeder bike they only made 1,000 of, and some one-off custom figures like Grand Moff Tarkin and an Imperial Spy. When I was a kid I really liked Han Solo, but when *Empire* came out, Boba Fett became the coolest. He was just the man.



EDDIE IZZARD
Stand-up comic, carries a frock beautifully

The end of *Star Wars* sucks big time. It's *Jim'll Fix It* badge time - very American, pat on the back type thing. It's one of the biggest examples of America versus Europe in

film. Everybody on the Death Star is English or European. They all represent European monarchy systems. Even Darth Vader - 'cos James Earl James could just be a European with a deeper voice. All the rebels are American. It's the American War Of Independence all over again.

I loved the idea of the Millennium Falcon - this ship flown by this rough shithead - that'd get to hyperspace if you banged it with a hammer hard enough. Until then, space was all shiny, and this introduced a cruddy element. I mean, the ship was nice once, but now it's a bit over the hill and keeps breaking down, like a '30s Porsche...

Star Wars was the first time that space wasn't a bit *Dr Who*, with walls that shook. And it was this action-Western set in the future, with the rough riders against the slick shitheads, so you can root for the underdog. Then there's the Jedi Knights - Arthurian knights of the round table, so nick that one and throw it in as well - and you've got the good one who went bad, which is basically the story of the Devil. They're all in there.



Robbing Hoods: R2D2 forgets that the Tatooine bin men always collect on Tuesdays



"I always thought Chewbacca was gay"

Phil Jupitus



MARK HAMILTON Fortuitously named Ash banist

We named our album 1977 because that was the year Tim Wheeler and I were born, and *Star Wars* was released. Me, Tim and Rick all grew up on *Star Wars* as kids. It's

one of my earliest ever memories, seeing the film in Dublin with my mum, on a double bill with *The Empire Strikes Back*, so I must have been around three or four. I don't know why it hit me. Everyone in the street had the toys... It was our life! For last year's end-of-tour party, our label managed to fly the original costumes over from America, which some hired people wore. I was so drunk that night, I don't remember much except punching Darth Vader on the back of the head.



RAY HARRYHAUSEN Stop-motion animation guru

I think we saw it back East in America. I was with Beverly Cross and Charles Schneer, the producer and writer of *Eye Of The Tiger*. We were doing publicity and we were

invited to some midnight preview. Everyone was anticipating something great. I thought the film was interesting. I don't know why they've re-released it. If the picture was effective when it was released, why'd they want to change it? These digital effects are just another tool - I don't think that everything should be discarded because of them. There was some stop-motion in *Star Wars* but it was very limited, just a few seconds. The opening scene with the spaceship was impressive, though. Of course they used that in *Independence Day*, too.



JAMIE HEWLETT Tank Girl creator

I first saw *Star Wars* when I was ten years old - I'd seen an advert for it on *Tiswas* - but going to see *The Empire Strikes Back* was better. I went with my girlfriend and she gave me my first blow-job, just at the moment when

Darth Vader removes his helmet and his head looks like a big purple knob. Vader was in a big bubble thing, and from behind you see his helmet being lowered onto his head and he gets up and says, (growly voice) "MASTER!" At that moment she was whipping out my schlong and popping it in her mouth. Don't print any names...



RON HOWARD Richie from *Happy Days*; director of *Apollo 13*

I'd worked with George on *American Graffiti*, and for his next project he told us, "I'm working on this science-fiction movie. It's hard to describe... It's not *Flash Gordon* but it's

kinda like *Flash Gordon*, have you seen those serials? Now that Kubrick's done *2001*, you can do a lot more with the special effects." Which I thought was a weird idea. Then, about two years later, I was talking to Cindy Williams, who was now starting to work on *Laverne And Shirley*, and I asked what was up with George, and she says, "I just auditioned for his new movie, *Star Wars*, but didn't get the part, but the script's terrible, the dialogue is so stiff. It's a great idea but George's out of his mind, he's got guys riding around ostriches and giant creatures. I don't know how he's gonna do anything of this stuff."



STEPHEN DORFF Stu Sutcliffe lookalike, star of *Space Truckers*

I was four when it came out. I first saw it when I was nine. I had my sword, the one that lit up. I used it to beat up my brother. I have to say that I like *Star*

Wars and *The Empire Strikes Back* better than *Star Trek*, because those guys were just more mental. I remember liking Harrison Ford a lot, he's a pretty amazing guy. I wanted one of those weird-shaped ships he had. That was really cool.



DEAN DEVLIN *Independence Day* writer/producer

I was 13. I stood in line for two hours to see the first showing at Grauman's Chinese Theatre. That first spaceship shot over and I thought, "This is really cool." We intentionally patterned *Independence Day*

after both *The Towering Inferno* and *The Poseidon Adventure*. But we definitely related through inspiration to *Star Wars*. You know, it's the underdogs versus the unbeatable enemy. But I'd be nervous to put our films in the same sentence as *Star Wars*. It's just the greatest film, for me.



GARY OLDMAN Method thug, stars with Harrison Ford in *Air Force One*

My kid's got models of Harrison Ford. He can't quite get his head round me working with Han Solo. We were doing a scene and I had to slap Harrison very hard. He said, "Just go for it. Loose hand. Hit me as hard as you want." So I slapped him up for a couple of days. Not everyone can go home, "What did you do at work honey?" "I just knocked the crap out of Indiana Jones." **N**

The remastered version of *Star Wars* is released on 21 March.

INTERVIEWS BY GRAHAM LINEHAN, ARTHUR MATHEWS, BEN MITCHELL, ROB LEGGATT, GARETH GRUNDY, MARK MORRIS, MARTIN ASTON, GARTH PEARCE, DAVID EIMER, CLARK COLLIS. ALEC GUINNESS QUOTE FROM ALEC GUINNESS: A CELEBRATION BY JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR, PAVILION BOOKS LIMITED.

...STRANGER THAN SCIENCE FICTION

25 random factoids from the *Star Wars* multiverse

1 Universal Studios originally turned down the option to make the film on the grounds that \$25,000 was too steep a price to develop the script. A conservative estimate puts this at a \$250 million mistake.

2 Nick Nolte, William Katt and Burt Reynolds were all considered for the part of Han Solo.

3 Harrison Ford, a professional carpenter, was planing the doors of Lucas's office when he was offered the job.



4 Jodie Foster and Sissy Spacek (left) were in the running for Princess Leia.

5 R2-D2 is editors' shorthand for Role 2, Dialogue 2.

6 The name C-3PO comes from a map of San Rafael, George Lucas's hometown in California. At reference C3 there's a post office.

7 George Lucas successfully sued the Strategic Defense Initiative supporters group for using the *Star Wars* name.

8 The Jawas were named after a Dr Jawa, established in Lucas's hometown since 1925.

9 Two of the Jawas were played by producer Gary Kurtz's kids.



10 Koo Stark (left) was in the Mos Eisley cantina scene.

11 Mark Hamill was originally paid £3,000. A percentage was later added.

12 Kenny Baker plastered the inside of the R2-D2 dome with *Playboy* cuttings to keep himself amused between takes.

13 The wording below the title was originally "20,000 years into the future..." rather than "A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away..."

14 The lasergun sounds were produced by hitting a wire fence with a stick.

15 The Millennium Falcon can be seen as part of the city in *Blade Runner*. It was painted black and stood on its end.



16 The lights on Darth Vader's breastplate are slot machine buttons (left).

17 The cameras used in the film were previously used in *The Ten Commandments*.

Their average working time was five minutes before repairs were needed.

18 Even on the plane to Tunisia, Lucas had not decided which of C-3PO's three possible heads he was going to use.

19 The Jawas' guns were Lee-Enfield rifles with bean tins stuck on the end.

20 Rather than building costly miniatures for filming *The Empire Strikes Back*, Lucas used Airfix models from the first film.

21 The alien who threatens Luke in the bar scene and gets his hand cut off by Alec Guinness is the first immortal decapitated by Christopher Lambert in *Highlander*.



22 Luke's Landspeeder was built around a Robin Reliant (left).

23 The shot of the landspeeder cruising across the Tatooine desert does not feature Mark Hamill.

The actor had injured his face, so a stunt double took his place.

24 In the original script Han Solo was a green-gilled alien and Luke Skywalker was a girl.

25 George Lucas has not directed another film since *Star Wars*.

BEN MITCHELL