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STAR WARS

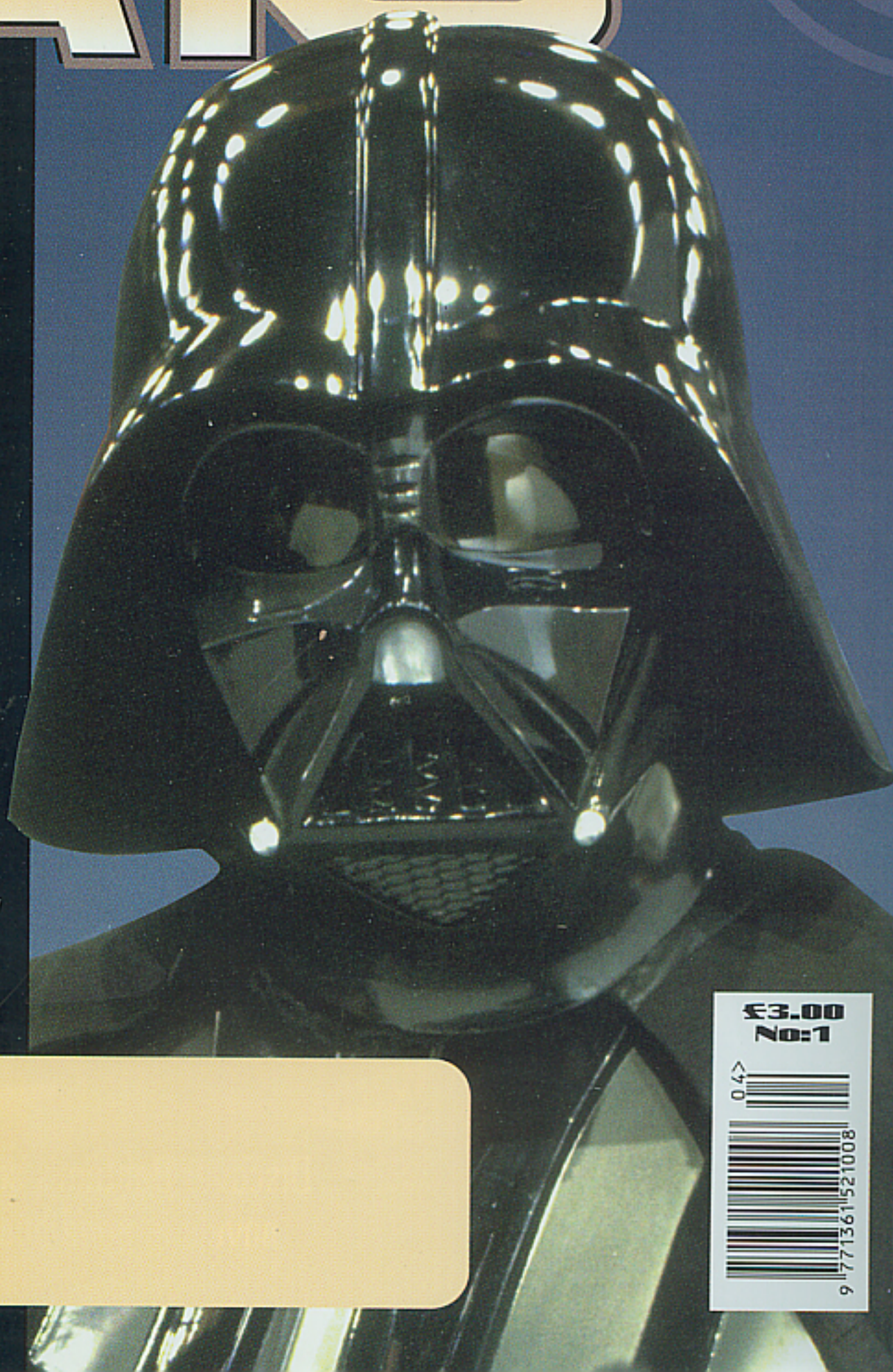
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PRODUCING THE STAR WARS PREQUELS



Above: A typical on location scene from *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*

Preparing a project the scope and size of the new *Star Wars* prequels is a difficult and momentous task. There are literally thousands of details that need to be attended to, including the co-ordination of hundreds of people. Organising and planning for the new prequels, even now, years before they are to be released, requires a certain kind of person: one who can tend to the details of the day, and at the same time provide an overall vision for their completion years from now.

The producer's role in this process is crucial to a film's success and, naturally, George Lucas wanted a hardworking individual with vast experience as a producer to work hand-in-hand with him on the important job of preparing the new *Star Wars* adventures, ensuring they are brought to life as close as possible to his vision. The choice was not a difficult one. Lucas looked to the man who had worked closely with him on another project, *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and chose British producer Rick McCallum.

McCallum has a long history of working in television and film, including the award-winning series *The Singing*

Detective for the BBC and has produced over 12 films in the UK, including *Dreamchild*, *Castaway* and *Pennies From Heaven*. Of course, he has been busy for the last several years working on the television series *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and, more recently, on the *Young Indiana Jones* television movies. He is also set to produce the new *Indiana Jones* feature film with Harrison Ford.

We met with Rick McCallum and discussed his involvement with the prequels and their current status, as well as his experience working on *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*....

Rick, how did you become involved with Lucasfilm?

I did a film called *Dreamchild* in 1984, which I was shooting at Elstree Studios. It was a tiny film; there were only about 12 of us working on it with a budget of only one million pounds and we had to shoot it in three weeks. Jim Henson had agreed to make the creatures for us. It was his first film other than working on Yoda for *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Dreamchild was about Alice in Wonderland and the complex relationship between the author who wrote the book and the little girl he based Alice on. It was a really fun picture to do. We had huge sets but they were all made out of cloth and painted. We had virtually no money.

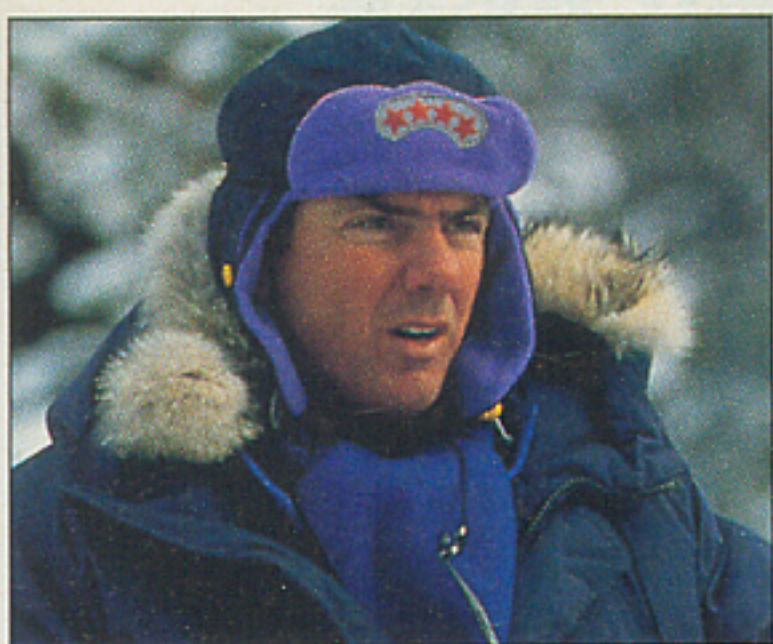
One day Producer Robert Watts, who has worked on many Lucasfilm projects, came on the set. We basically connected and Robert went back and told everybody that we were making a film that looked big but had only 12 people behind the scenes! And I think that kind of stuck in George's head.

You have to remember, George comes from a tradition of making small, independent films – that's where his heart really is, not in the huge blockbusters that he is associated with.

In 1989, George got the idea for *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. Robert then introduced me to George and we got along very well. We had a few more chats and then he asked me, through Robert, who wanted to pursue his own projects, if I wanted to do the show.

I thought the series sounded fun. It was more than fun – it was brilliant. It was one of the most enjoyable times of my career. In fact, oddly enough, I hardly saw my family during the four years that we were making the show. My wife could deal with it, though, because she knew it was a special moment in everybody's life.

"Some of the special effects you saw in Forrest Gump are things we were doing four years ago on Young Indy."



Dan Madsen catches up with Rick McCallum and discovers how to bring a television adventure series under budget, the latest developments on the Star Wars prequels and some places in the world you would probably not want to film in ever again...

What kind of work went into producing *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*?

The overall strategy was that we wanted to give the series a feature film-quality look. At the start, we didn't know if we could actually do it, but after the first year, we knew that we could. We did this because the only way you can actually control the destiny of your life in the film business is to be able to reach a point where you are successful but at a level that generates enough profit that you don't need to be subsidised by a studio. It's not for material gain, it's solely for the ability to do the work you want to do.

The question for *Young Indy* was, 'Can you make a series as a normal, network television show on location, with huge production values, and be able to shoot three times as long?' On television shows each week, 50% of the budget goes to the three or four people, mainly the stars, the writer and the creator. They make a fortune. They'll have eight to 10 actors and each one will make \$50,000 to \$75,000 each week... well, you can see how that can skyrocket your budget.

The only way the production companies could bring the cost down was to shoot an episode in five days, but you can't consistently maintain the quality trying to produce a show in that amount of time. That's why studios try to build all the sets on one sound stage so they don't have to go out anymore. You can't do good work that way.

Well, we said, "Forget about that, let's spend 90% of our budget on making the movie and the other 10% on everybody else." Feature films shoot about three and a half pages of script a day. That's at the level where you can really have good performances, light the set well and everything else. So we needed to stretch our shooting to 15 days for the same amount of money everybody else spends to shoot in five days. Once I got into that, we were there.

We were doing a lot of things through innovative visual effects on *Young Indy* as well. Some of the special effects you saw in *Forrest Gump* are things we were doing four years ago on *Young Indy*. Now we can use that digital technology on the new *Star Wars* films, so we have benefited from our initial work in that area.

We actually had a couple of major breakthroughs on the show. One was in an episode set in Vienna (*Vienna 1917*). I desperately wanted to shoot in the Spanish riding school in Vienna and tried to get permission for seven months and could not get through. Then I found a building in Prague that was underground and had some of the same features, and a young Japanese artist Yusei Uesugi at ILM did a matte paint-



ing to make it look like what we needed. He actually produced our first breakthrough painting on *Young Indy* – he literally made the Spanish riding school for me.

Above: Sean Patrick Flanery is convincingly cast as the 16-17 year old Indiana

Young Indy took you all over the world and into places that are completely remote. Do you recall any of the hardships you faced while shooting?

Well, we actually shot for 152 weeks, we served over 120,000 meals and travelled as a group over 165,000 miles – that's over six times around the world. We shot with over 50,000 extras, had over 1,500 speaking parts and shot enough 16 mm film to go from New York to Phoenix. It was a huge production: the longest location shoot in film history. There were a lot of incredible people who worked on *Young Indy*. Many broke down and couldn't make it through the entire production of the series. There were only six of us who made it all the way from the beginning and were involved with every single episode.

One of the scariest moments on the show was when we were just outside the Somali border. On our first day of shooting, I had our entire cast on a boat that capsized on a sandbar at a place called Croc Point, where every single major crocodile on the Tana River rests. The crocodiles were actually frightened by so many people falling into the river! The river was filthy and filled with every kind of tropical



Above: Harrison Ford agreed to guest-star in an episode of *Young Indy*.

"We got caught in a huge avalanche in Italy. We got hit by floods in Venice. We had the earthquake. We filmed in the worst desert you can possibly live in. We've been in Monsoons in Nairobi and Lamu – I mean torrential rain, 60 to 70 inches."

disease. It was a miracle that the film didn't just end then. We had to rebuild another boat because we couldn't get the one that capsized out of the water for a week!

You must have to have a good insurance policy when you're filming all over the world like that.

That's the one thing you definitely do! Actually, we've had many near-catastrophes. The day of the big earthquake in Los Angeles is when we were shooting *Young Indiana Jones and the Hollywood Follies*. We were in Filmore, right next to the epicentre. Our hotel was completely demolished! We would've literally lost over 200 people – we had 150 extras that day – if we had been shooting when the earthquake hit. It was an amazing stroke of luck!

Of course, after the earthquake, everything closed down; however, we kept shooting, finished the episode right on schedule and incorporated the whole earthquake into the film.

We have actually been hit by every major disaster you can think of. We got caught in a huge avalanche in Italy. We got hit by floods in Venice. We had the earthquake. We filmed in the worst desert you can possibly live in. We've been in Monsoons in Nairobi and Lamu – I mean torrential rain, 60 to 70 inches. When we were in Turkey our equipment was confiscated. Islamic Fundamentalists put a threat out on our lives for two weeks and we had 60 bodyguards the whole time we shot there. And yet, with all of those problems we actually came in a day under schedule each year of shooting.

You know, the art of it is doing it for the amount of money we said we could do it for. That was the whole agenda – meeting the budget and schedule. Anybody can do it if you spend all the money in the world. The average film goes over budget by \$2 - \$5 million now. There is no commitment to the studio and to the job.

How did you get Harrison Ford to guest-star on an episode of Young Indy?

Basically, we needed a wraparound. We realised that the

old *Young Indy* wraparounds were not working and people weren't responding to them well. Although they liked George Hall, the actor, they didn't like the idea of seeing Indy older. We needed to do a bookend. George called Harrison and he agreed to do it if we could shoot at his home – he was in the middle of shooting *The Fugitive*. So I flew from Prague to Jackson Hole, prepped it for about a week, got a little crew together and we shot it in a day. It was a lot of fun! Harrison arrived on the set on a snowmobile and we just shot it.

What does the future hold for Young Indy?

Our dream now is to connect the episodes to make two-hour movies and come out with 20 feature films for video. Each one of the episodes we've done this year will be added to the list such as *The Hollywood Follies*, *The Eye of The Peacock* and *Travels With Father*. There is more that we would like to tell but I think it's finished now. We had so much fun making those shows, though.

Are you going to be involved in another Indiana Jones movie that would star Harrison Ford?

Yes, I will. We're waiting for the script for the new Indiana Jones film right now. But if the script is good and we can get Steven Spielberg and Harrison Ford and their schedules straightened out over the next two years, it's something we all want to do.

We've received the first draft of the script from Jeffrey Boam which everybody loves. Steven Spielberg has made some changes and George has a few more changes to do. The script will next go to Harrison Ford for approval. Then it's up to the gods to determine when George, Steven and Harrison's schedules will coincide. The project is definitely alive, and it's a good script. Jeffrey really came through for us.

How were you approached to produce the new Star Wars movies?

George and I started talking about it two or three years ago. [Referring to *Young Indy*] we would say, 'Well, this is the

PRODUCING THE STAR WARS PREQUELS

Right: Corey Carrier, Indy at 9-10 years old and Sean Patrick Flanery, the 16-17 year old Indy

ADVENTURE'S YOUNGEST NAME

Young Indiana Jones Profile by Andy Mangels

The world of entertainment is full of rough-and-tumble adventurous boys (and a few girls) whose penchant for trouble seems ever-present enough that any parent would want to lock them away for safekeeping. Perhaps no youth had quite as many adventures as young Henry Jones, Jr., known to his father as 'Junior', but to everyone else as 'Indiana' Jones. Long before Indiana Jones was to search for the Ark of the Covenant or embark on a last crusade to find the Holy Grail, he was busy exploring the world with his parents, his tutor and assorted famous persons. Were he a real person, the stories Indiana could tell. . .

Of course, the world of entertainment has never stopped anyone, real or imaginary, from telling their stories. One of the most celebrated storytellers in recent film history is George Lucas, and he could not have imagined that his creation, a stubble-chinned archaeologist named Indiana Jones, would hold the public's fancy as it did.

First in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and then in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), the heroic Indy, played by charismatic Harrison Ford, would face cliff-hangers the likes of which cinema screens had not seen since movie serials in the 1930s and 1940s. Small wonder that the films themselves were set in that time period. But in movies, time can be elastic, and thus it was that *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) would introduce to the world Young Indiana Jones, as played in several scenes by the late River Phoenix.

It was while working on *Last Crusade* that George Lucas hit upon an idea. Why not tell more adventures featuring Young Indy and teach audiences about history at the same time? Lucas began developing a multimedia project called *A Walk Through Early Twentieth Century: History with Indiana Jones*, which later evolved into a television series entitled *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*. The stories would alternate between three time periods: 1908-1910, 1916-1917, and 1992-1993, with George Hall cast in the part of the 93 year-old Indiana Jones, primarily to add bookends to the stories.

A Broadway actor, George Hall never envisioned himself playing an adventurer at his age, but he had his dreams fulfilled by proxy in this role. "As a boy I dreamed of having the exciting life that Indy has. There isn't a little boy - or a big boy - who hasn't."



The youngest Indy is somewhat hampered in his adventuring by his tutor, though the around-the-world tour his parents have brought him on certainly provides opportunity if the ingenious young man can find the means. Eleven-year-old Corey Carrier plays the 9-10 year-old Indy, and had the time of his life while doing so. "I've learned about the different cultures, and so many things that I couldn't really learn from a textbook," Carrier said in a 1992 interview. "This is real life, so I'm going to the places where this has really happened."

The 16-17 year-old Indy (Sean Patrick Flanery) finds himself globe-trotting in a world facing the first World War, as well as such issues as women's rights and racism. Whether a member of the Belgian Army or fighting with the Mexican revolutionary, Pancho Villa, Indy keeps the action ever-present. Flanery prepared for months for the demanding role, taking horseback riding lessons (he rode Hurricane, the same horse Harrison Ford did in the film trilogy), learning stunt work and foreign languages and studying Ford's film mannerisms and bullwhip work. Flanery had never left North America when he got the globe-trotting adventurer's role, but "just like Indiana Jones on the series, I, too, have been given a passport to see the world through this show."

Besides the talent before the camera, many people behind the camera lent substantial skills to the series. Directors such as Terry Jones, Billy August, Nicolas Roeg, Mike Newell, Joe Johnston, Simon Wincer and several other international directors worked from scripts by a number of writers.

Guest-stars on the series often portrayed famous historical figures whose paths the young Indy would cross in his travels. Famous characters (and thespians) who appeared on the series included: Sigmund Freud (Max von Sydow), Albert Schweitzer (Friedrich Von Thun), Pablo Picasso, Lawrence of Arabia, President Theodore Roosevelt, Al Capone (Nicholas Turturro), Mata Hari (Domiziana Giordano), Franz Kafka and Ho Chi Minh.

Locations for *Young Indy* were set in 100 cities in 21 countries, including Africa, India, Egypt, Britain,



France, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Russia, China, Italy, Ireland, Austria, Turkey, and the United States. Extras and sets were outfitted for the correct period look, although many scenes were altered with some of television's first use of Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) effects, courtesy of ILM.

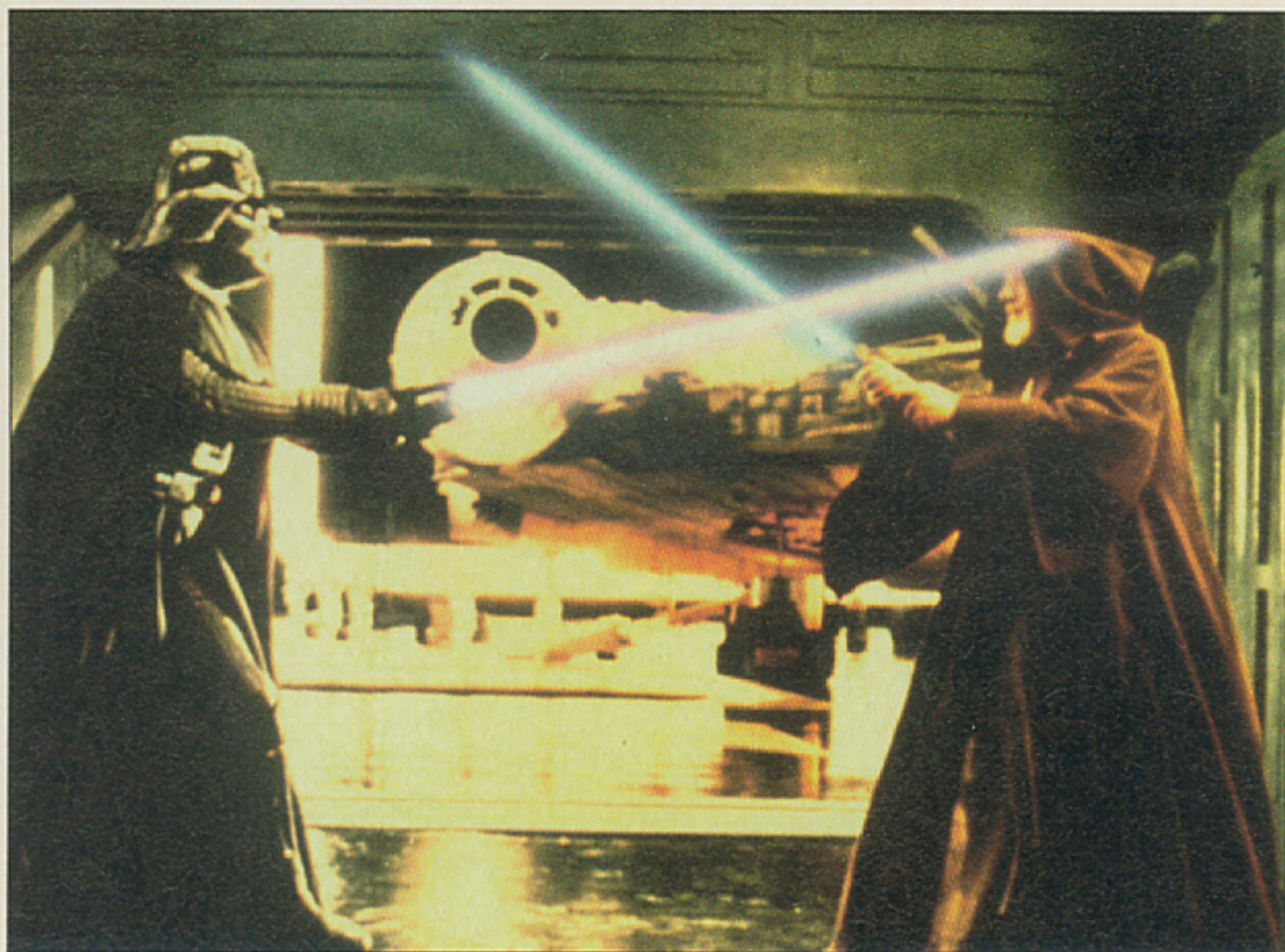
The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles premiered on the US's ABC network on 4 March 1992, with a two-hour film entitled *Young Indiana Jones and the Curse of the Jackal*. Although the series got off to a good start, ABC consistently rescheduled later episodes, making it challenging for fans to figure out when to catch their favourite adventurer. Thanks to George Lucas' persuasions, ABC kept the series for a second season. After 24 episodes, with four left unaired, the series was cancelled by the network.

During its two years on the air, *Young Indy* was noticed by educators and arbiters of taste alike. The series was nominated for no less than 25 Emmy awards, and won 11 of them! Schools were given study guides for use with videotapes of certain episodes, making history more popular.

Lucas never lost his enthusiasm for *Young Indy*. Shortly after ABC cancelled the series, a cable network, The Family Channel, picked up the rights to broadcast four new *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* movies, three with Flanery, and one with Carrier. The four telefilms remain unaired in the United Kingdom, although between airings on BBC1 and Sky One, Britain's airwaves have seen all 29 of the original series episodes.

Although *Young Indy* has come to a halt on television, it is unlikely that viewers have seen the last of the adventurer. With a fourth Indiana Jones movie being written and video releases of *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* proceeding, it isn't likely to be long before the fedora and bullwhip are taken up again, by young and old alike!

Andy Mangels is the author of *Star Wars: The Essential Guide to Characters*, as well as numerous comic book and Star Wars projects.



Left: The new Star Wars prequels will tell the story of the choices made by Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan which set them on opposing sides

way *Star Wars* has to be done.' But George never asked me if I wanted to do it, it was just understood. We did talk about the new films and we would discuss the easiest way to do the films.

What is the status of the new prequels?

We've begun the animatics on two large sequences. Animatics are a 3-D representation of our storyboard process on some of our larger action sequences. As each storyboard gets completed, and George refines it and makes his changes, we output them in animatic form, using a computer program that allows us to create vehicles and landscapes in 3-D. We then begin to output them in shots and start to edit a sequence. Although it is not on film, it *looks* like film, so it allows us to storyboard and schedule and find the rhythm and pace of a large action sequence. It's an effective tool which helps us to visualise a sequence before shooting it. It's a communication tool more than anything else. For me, it helps enormously with budgeting and scheduling.

George is continuing to write away feverishly; there is so much back-story to develop. Creating these amazing worlds and getting it all into this huge complex narrative structure is

very, very difficult.

We'd like to do some third-unit shooting this year and begin shooting principal photography some time in 1997. It's likely we will shoot the new *Star Wars* films in England. We haven't determined when the picture will be released. I expect it will be either in 1998 or 1999.

Do you have some approved ships and creature designs at this point?

Yes, we do, and we have a lot of creature designs that are being approved. We're building up to the fact that a very large part of these movies will be animated, in the sense that they will feature creatures and vehicles that will be brought to life through computer animation.

There will certainly be incredible visual effects, but the real essence of these films will be the story and the characters. What made *Star Wars* work was the universe George created and, of course, the mythic structure of the story. Basically, it was a story about good and evil.

We have no interest in making the biggest film or the most special effects-laden picture of all time. This is the story of Anakin Skywalker and what happened to him. Obviously, we want these films to be beautiful and have the best production design, but the story is the most important element.

What about casting?

It's very preliminary right now. Our casting director, Robin Gurland, has been to England, New York, Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago. We're currently searching for two young characters and that's gone very well – no one has been cast for any of the roles. We're simply going out and seeing who's out there and who could be ready in the next two years. I'd like to ask you to inform everyone that, unfortunately, we can't accept unsolicited calls or résumés: we're only accepting résumés and head shots through agents.

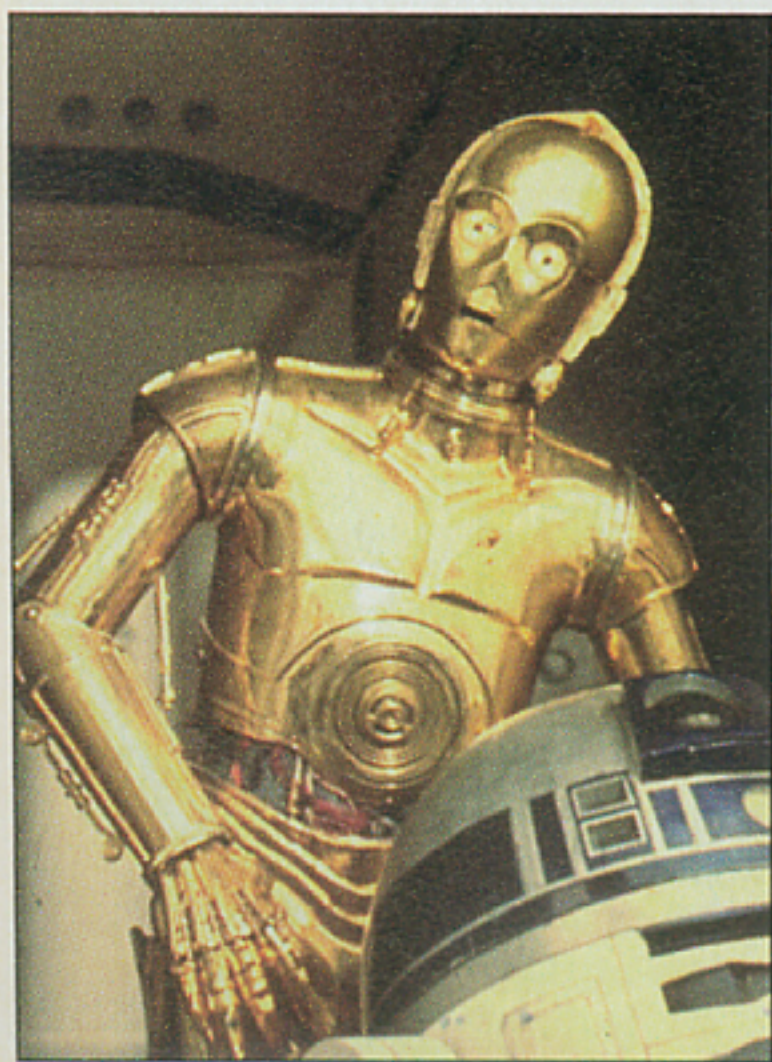
George has mentioned in previous interviews that it's likely we'll see C-3PO and Yoda in these new films. Is that still the case?

Yes. It would be an earlier version of C-3PO. And there are a lot of droids, too.

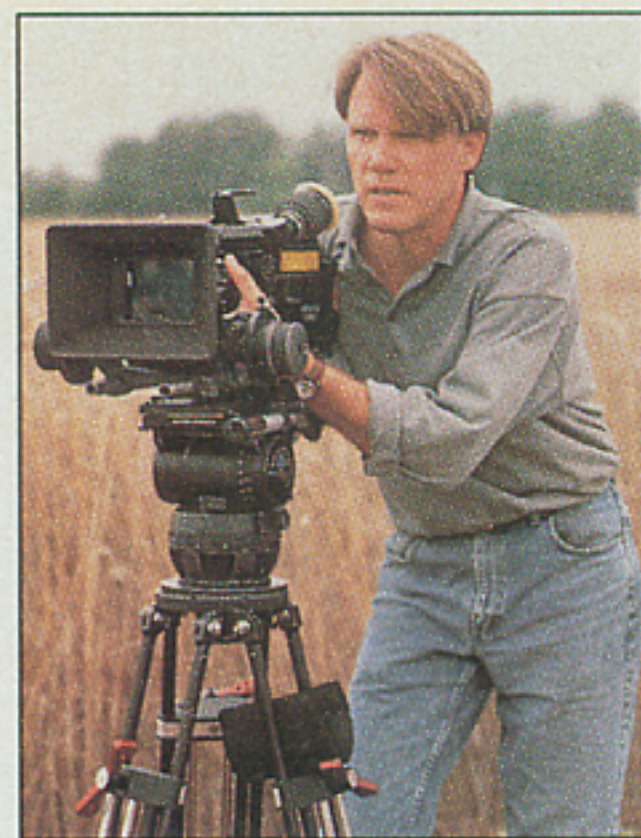
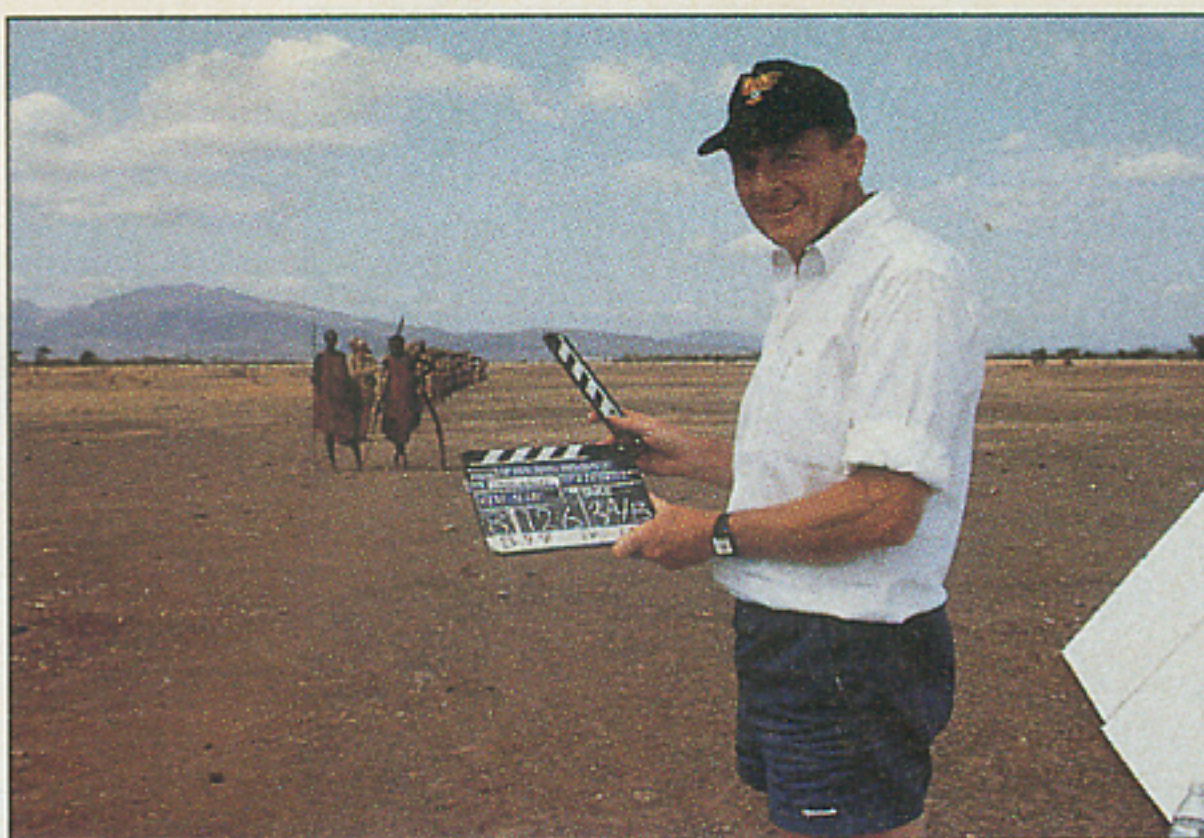
George has also said that when these movies are done people will see that this is Darth Vader's story being told, not Luke Skywalker's.

This is the story about one of the most extraordinary kids who ever had the power of the Force, the story of Anakin and what happened to him and that inevitable moment when he chose between good and evil. Why did that happen and how

Below: Two familiar faces we may see in the prequels, an earlier version of the droid C-3PO, and the Jedi master, Yoda



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did it happen? Where did he come from and how could he have made that choice? That's the real saga. The ultimate moment is when you see Darth Vader reveal himself – the impact of that moment will be incredible!

I think it's basically that crucial moment that everybody usually has in their life that he is going to deal with in these films. Once you've been educated, you basically have a choice to make in what you are going to do with your life. Anakin makes one choice, Obi-Wan makes another.

Once you've made that choice it's very hard to turn back. Some people can, at that very last moment, like we saw with Darth/Anakin in *Return of the Jedi*. But it's basically that whole dramatic situation, certainly in the first film – the choice that you ultimately make between good and evil, right and wrong.

What George had to struggle with on the first three *Star Wars* films was to create a universe of people and places and their relationships and the way the story was going to go and how they all interrelated. It's somewhat easier now because he knows all those characters and where they came from but there still is the essence of what makes a powerful, dramatic story that has to be dealt with.

Even though these films will be different in many ways from the previous Star Wars films, there still must be a continuity so that we feel we're in the same universe.

Exactly. We're only talking about 40 years before *Star Wars*. But there are lots of opportunities for major stuff. 40 years in the *Star Wars* universe is a huge amount of time!

Do you recall seeing the original Star Wars yourself?

I'll never forget driving home after leaving work early on a Friday night the week it opened and seeing the lines of people at the theatre in Los Angeles. At the time I was finishing up on the film *Black Sunday*. I recall that after we had first previewed it, I was desperately trying to get John Williams, who had done our score, to re-do the ending for the film. He was in London at that time, finishing the score for *Star Wars* but he found the time to re-do the ending for *Black Sunday* as well.

The word-of-mouth around the industry was that *Star Wars* was going to do so badly – it was supposed to be the biggest turkey of all time! I remember thinking, "Those poor people making *Star Wars*! They're really going to lose it all on this!" Everybody thought it was going to be a disaster. I couldn't believe it when I drove down Wilshire Blvd. and the lines went all the way around the block! George had so little faith he was right across the street from the Mann's Chinese

"This is the story about one of the most extraordinary kids who ever had the power of the Force, the story of Anakin and what happened to him and that inevitable moment when he chose between good and evil."

Theatre and didn't even know it was opening there. I had never seen lines like that. Of course, when I saw the movie, I was blown away!

It's going to be an experience for you working on such highly visible films as the new Star Wars prequels.

Yes, I've never worked on such a successful movie like this. The shooting won't be so new to me but the aftermath, if it works, will. One of the great things I remember about working in England in the eighties is that we could make a film for a million dollars and there would be a small audience to see it. It wouldn't make any money, but it wouldn't lose any either. Making smaller films like that was very worthwhile to me. But then, in about 1989, I suddenly got to thinking, "I love doing these kinds of films and they're a lot of fun, but nobody has actually seen them!" Your friends and your family and peers would see them but they were not really getting out anywhere. That was actually the turning point for me in deciding to do *Young Indy*.

Above left and right:
Two of the directors from
Young Indy: Simon Wincer
and Joe Johnston
Below: Extra footage has
been shot for the scene at
Mos Eisley spaceport





Above: Another scene where extra footage has been shot for the Special Edition is the stormtroopers' arrival on Tatooine

What are your hopes for the new Star Wars movies, both professionally and personally?

Well, professionally I want to be able to achieve the finest that I think I can actually do. I also want to be able to lead and try to get as many people to deliver the best that they can possibly do for George's vision of not only *Star Wars* but what he wants to achieve in the future. That's the single biggest goal. As a story, I really want to be able to be a part of making a truly, deeply, profoundly good movie that touches people all over the world. I would like to be able to have that experience and see what that's like.

One of the things I learned most from *Young Indy* is that, at the end of the day, what you have done is a qualitative experience. It's not how much you made. We travelled all around the world and did something that no one has ever done on television. We were not acknowledged publicly for it but that had nothing to do with anyone's thoughts about the experience. We all grew up together. We have another stage of development to go through now, and that's on *Star Wars*. We're now totally interdependent on one another. On most movies, you don't have enough time and the film is over in eight to 10 weeks. You don't have the same interdependency, psychologically and emotionally, we'll need to sustain the level that we want to achieve on the *Star Wars* prequels. Hopefully, we also have the best story in the world to tell, too. The visual effects will be important to the new films but the story is primary.

I can only imagine that you will be using innovative technology to produce those effects, much like you are doing with the special edition of Star Wars in 1997.

Yes, that's true. Fans will see new sequences in the re-release like when Han meets Jabba the Hutt, but we are also trying to get rid of all the matte lines and other things that George couldn't realise years ago because the technology wasn't there. I think what is going to be amazing about the re-release is to see everybody's children watching it for the first time and to see how little we have actually progressed in 20 years. I think it will stand out as being really remarkable. People will see today how beautifully done it was then.

I'm very excited with the way the re-release is coming along; it's been a wonderful experience. The visual effects

producer, Tom Kennedy, with Alex Seiden as the visual effects supervisor, have put together a great team of people at ILM, who have been able to finally accomplish everything George wanted but couldn't do when the film was originally released. Although there is only about four minutes of new footage, we're having to restore the entire film because the negative is in such poor quality. Originally it was just a restoration project, but during the process we realised that we could change some of the things that had always bothered George – things that he technically could not have achieved when he made the film. I think hard-core fans will notice the additions and love all the improvements.

What kinds of things will we see?

In the Mos Eisley Spaceport scene you can actually see Luke's landspeeder get off the ground. Now as they enter Mos Eisley, you realise it is a much more dangerous place than previously depicted. We just got back from Yuma, Arizona, where we were shooting additional plate shots for the scene where the stormtroopers arrive on Tatooine. There should have been dewbacks in the background, but they wouldn't work mechanically. So now you can see them in the background with some stormtroopers. We also have a CG stormtrooper that will blow people away.

There are other tiny little things that George has added that are really fun. The real key is the restoration of the film. Twentieth Century-Fox has been unbelievable in all of this. I've always dreamed of having such a great relationship with a studio. It goes beyond their instinct in the new movies; they are serious fans who want this done right.

Rick, in conclusion, what have you found to be the greatest pleasure in working for Lucasfilm?

The real pleasure is George. There are many other people here at Lucasfilm I love working with and I loved the people I worked with on *Young Indy*, too. They just amazed me every day. Luckily, I still have six people who have been with me the whole time. If we film the new *Star Wars* movies in England, the people who did *Young Indy* will most likely be doing *Star Wars*, too. But honestly, George still amazes me every day; his concentration, his dedication, his commitment – the unselfish way he conducts his life with us is amazing. ■

Dan Madsen is Publisher and Editor of the US magazine Star Wars Insider, and will be bringing us regular updates on the new Star Wars films from Rick McCallum.

Below: The man with the technology at his fingertips... Rick McCallum, on set with George Lucas

