

George Lucas Did Not “R*pe Your Childhood”

(An Exploration of Adult Fan-Toxicity and its Effects on Adolescent Fandom)

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Artistic Aims

From its conception, “The Star Wars Senior Project” was anything but a conventional one. So the story of it will begin in the most appropriate way possible:

A long time ago in (what feels like) a galaxy far far away, February 2020 to be exact, my friend and colleague Alexander Osani entered our section of Junior Seminar with only one goal in mind- do a senior project about Star Wars no matter what. We had become friends not very long before banding together for this mission, but in the short time we spent together gushing about our shared passion for collecting Legos, the upcoming final season of *Star Wars: Clone Wars*, and mourning the recent tragedy that was *Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker*, we also talked a lot about our school, our art, our identities as Jews and our privilege as cis white men. In short, as Rey puts it in Rian Johnson’s *The Last Jedi*, we were looking to “find my place in all this”. Our program’s senior projects were typically known for a lot of politically charged theatre. A lot of important stories about race, gender identity, etc, which were always told by the right people to tell them. We knew it wasn’t our place to do anything like that being of the privilege we are, so what should we do? Would it be tone deaf of us to do a slapstick comedy while our classmates were baring their souls? Everyone was doing plays based off important parts of their identities, and Alexander and I certainly didn’t want to explore our shared Jewish identities through a cliché play about The Holocaust or something of that nature, so we defaulted to the only other identity that we had which was nerds. Dorks! Dweebs! Losers! Children!

So the “UNTITLED STAR WARS SENIOR PROJECT” was born. Alexander and I would spend the next month discussing and arguing over our favorite characters, who had to be included and why etc, and somewhere in there we realized we needed a basic plot/story first. In its infancy, it was supposed to be a play about two brothers, playing with their action figures silently at the front of the stage, and whatever it was that they were doing is the action we would see on stage. The actors on stage dressed as the characters being played with, spouting epic, yet cheesy dialogue made up by the two brothers playing. The audience would realize throughout the show what is going on in the kids' lives... we talked about it maybe being that they were grieving, their parents were divorcing, or even something like one was being bullied at school. The basic idea was to explore the idea of “play” in theatre. Our tagline through the entire process was around the idea that action figures are theatre for kids. It's a creative outlet where the player is the director and the toys are the actors. It was an exciting exploration for us as self proclaimed man children (one of whom even admitted to using action figures sometimes in a childlike meditation to help him get out script ideas in his own writing work). It was important to us to have the aspects of immaturity we love shine through the brightest in our project. Anyone watching it should feel as if they went back to their parents house on a random weekend or holiday, found their old box of toys, and started playing with them a little bit when no one was looking.

We planned to interrogate our thoughts and ideas through getting representation from different sides of the fandom. We wanted to make sure we spoke with fans and non fans who were around in 1977, as well as fans and non fans that grew up in the early 2000's under the Prequel films. It was important to us that anyone we involved in our project were to have fun.

That we would facilitate an environment of joking and fun and just talking Star Wars in general. That's what fandom SHOULD be and that's what it would be in our space.

As Master Yoda says, “Difficult to see. Always in motion is the future” So when the future of March 2020 revealed itself to us, we shifted accordingly. The pandemic had many casualties, one of them being our ability to do live theatre, as well as my own enthusiasm for the art form. As Alexander and I discussed and consumed the types of theatre going on around us in the times of doom and Zoom, I more often than not felt a sort of resentment and disillusionment toward the art form I had spent more than half of my college career and life studying. It was time for our artistic goals to shift so that the project could survive. In a time of darkness, we would find a way to celebrate and explore this thing we loved. Even if someone had never seen a Star Wars movie, or couldn't tell a Kyber crystal from Kessel spice, they would feel love from this project if it was the death of us. Now with nothing but the medium of film to pivot to, it was time for a new and unexpected chapter in mine and Alexander’s journeys as artists (and through the Force?). It was exciting in a time of daily monotony and we couldn't wait to take the leap.

Research Essay

Star Wars has been with me longer than I can remember. I am certain it will outlive many relationships in my life as it already has in only 23 years and I do not know whether or not something I should necessarily brag about. During the time I worked on this project, I also held a job babysitting a 2 year old girl for a close family friend, which afforded me invaluable access to the creative process in children's "play" that originally had inspired us to pursue this story. The toddler in question named Lily, is a very imaginative kid. Growing up during a lockdown she was very used to playing alone, and now had the advantage of having her babysitter be a toy enthusiast, and received many extra cast members to her collection as a result. She was very into The Muppet Babies, as well as Sesame Street characters, and now "Baby Yoda". *The Mandalorian* is a very violent and gritty TV show as far as rating guidelines for toddlers. She definitely did not watch it, but somehow was enthralled at the idea of "Baby Yoda" or "Grogu!!" as I would often correct her. I asked her grandparents, as well as her mother, a hundred times, "how does she know about this if she doesn't watch the show?" If it were regular times I might understand that the many tentacles of Disney's branding/advertising expertise could have caught her attention in the toy aisle, or even on a box of Cheez-Its in the grocery store, but this was a toddler that had not left the house since before she had the ability to use a toilet by herself.

In the age of the internet, content escapes no one regardless of age. I learned there was a Youtube video titled "Baby Yoda Chicken Nuggets Song" posted by "Herr Fuchs", a popular channel for children's content. In the video a cartoon depiction of worldwide phenomenon Baby Yoda is seen lamenting over his need for "chikky nuggies". Once a seemingly sentient aroma line enters frame and alerts him to the presence of potential "chikky nuggies", Baby Yoda promptly

steals a large blue dump truck and pulls out a minimalist map with a dotted line leading to a picture of Baby Yoda himself to a destination marked as “Nugget Haven”. He continues to sing along his journey to the Nugget Haven, describing how happy he will be once he achieves his goal. Once he arrives at the drive through window, Baby Yoda sings his demand to “give me, give me, give me chicky nuggies” to which upon my first of many viewings, I remarked was rather rude of him to not say “please”, to which Lily concurred. Baby Yoda then rejoices in even more high pitched squeaky song, as he sits atop a dump truck full of chicken nuggets and devours them all in a bouncing cartoon heart fueled chicken nugget bender. When he comes to, he has a bellyache, burps, and laments nothing. He has no regrets. As one might imagine, a serious fan such as myself could stomach this deviation from source material no less easier than Baby Yoda could his chicken nuggets. Lily however enjoyed this so much, she insisted on watching it no less than 7 times a day. I found it interesting that THIS would mark Lily’s first experience with the Star Wars franchise. I wasn't sure if she would become a fan at all, but in the age of Star Wars being a mainstream fandom, she will surely have more experiences to come with the stories.

Lisa Marie Fletcher remarks in her article for *The Canadian Homeschooler*, “Learning Benefits of Fandom” that Fandom certainly can be healthy for kids, especially in areas such as communication and creativity. “Many fandoms are rife with amazing artwork. If your child is an artist, they can use their skills to create art of their favorite person or moment or a fictitious version of things. Fans love artwork.... One of the most important learning benefits of fandoms are the communities it creates. It is almost guaranteed that if you are a huge fan of something, you will find someone else somewhere in the world who is just as much a fan. Having something in common with other people to talk about creates plenty of opportunities for communication.

It's a great ice breaker for conversation.” As Lily entered preschool, she would go on to make friends with similar interests in her respective fandoms, *Frozen*, *Winnie The Pooh*, *Encanto*, not necessarily Star Wars that I know of, but fine, that's ok. The more and more Lily would watch Baby Yoda in this unlicensed abomination of a contribution to the Star Wars fan film canon, she would talk and ask about Baby Yoda more, drawing him in different situations with “Baby Yoda’s Daddy” (The Mandalorian) mimicking situations in her own life, even bringing her feelings about anything from her favorite people and foods to the attention of myself and her guardians through her drawings. It was amazing to see Star Wars act as a conduit for her as it had for myself for my whole life so early in hers.

Having to repeatedly sit through the blasphemous tale of Baby Yoda’s hunger fueled journey that would have made Joseph Campbell roll over in his grave (but maybe give an old school Pucinella a run for their money) reaffirmed a perspective on fandom for me that I was already aware of but had never seen in practice. The reality is that Star Wars fans suck. To put it in a more academic way, they have a proclivity to be rather unpleasant. Up until the past 10-15 years, Star Wars fans were looked upon as nerdy, extreme, outsiders, etc and often had a victim complex about it. Let's start at the beginning. 1977- 1994 (The Original Trilogy era). The original *Star Wars* (later to be renamed *Episode IV: A New Hope*) was released in theaters, blowing up the world into a frenzy and redefining the modern blockbuster. Later in 1980 and 1983 respectively, the first trilogy rounded itself out with *The Empire Strikes Back* as well as *Return of The Jedi*. The culture at the time for nerds was one of ostracization, being bullied, and punished by society for their interests. Your typical Steve Urkel stereotype, Eugene Felsnic from *Grease*. These high waisted pants, suspended, thick framed glasses wearing warriors grew up with enormous chips on their shoulders for the hardships they endured. They lived out the rest of

their glory days as the Original, FIRST Star Wars fans consuming mostly printed media and video game contributions to the Star Wars universe, such as The Thrawn Trilogy of novels by author Timothy Zahn (widely referred to as the original episodes VII, VIII and IX). There were also tabletop games, projects like *Shadows of the Empire*, (an ambitious cross-platform transmedia experience, spanning comic books, novels, video games, and action figure series). This all aside from the few mediocre poorly received Ewok based spinoff movies, *Battle for Endor* and *Caravan of Courage*. The original nerds first lashed out and showed signs of toxic nature en masse in 1997 with the release of the Star Wars trilogy “special editions' ' which featured updated VFX as well as slight shot changes. These changes were made by original creator George Lucas himself, who had every legal and creative right to edit his own work if he felt like it. However it was already at a point that fans felt a sense of ownership towards the material they had devoted their lives to. Message boards and hate mail began pouring in from die hard fans setting the stage for what was to come.

In 1992 George Lucas announced plans to create and direct three new Star Wars films “Focusing on a young Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker, a.k.a. Darth Vader...”. The films premiering in 1999, 2002, and 2005 respectively. This would largely define what is known as “The Prequel Era” of Star Wars fandom, which is also largely remembered for an intense amount of hatred and toxicity. Displeased with the growing popularity causing the franchise to become bigger than “just theirs”, The OG fans began lashing out towards George Lucas for not producing content that matched their headcanon, and extended media they had grown accustomed to in the 16 year hiatus (none of which was authored, by Lucas). Many fans protested, wrote letters of hate, threatened death, and very popularly and proudly declared that “George Lucas raped my childhood”. Look no further than the 2008 *South Park* Episode titled

The China Problem, in which Steven Spielberg and George Lucas are portrayed as the rapists of fictional character Indiana Jones, the main character of a franchise of the same name. *Indiana Jones* is almost a companion franchise to *Star Wars*, having the same creators and sharing a leading man in Harrison Ford as Han Solo and Indiana Jones. This Prequel Era, where fans such as my collaborator Alexander and myself grew up, remember the rhetoric painfully well. I was 11 years old being bullied by 36 year old Scottish men in *Lego Star Wars* facebook fan pages. (Rauri Williamson from Edinburgh, I haven't forgotten, and I'm glad your Youtube channel failed) Being the dominant adult voices in a franchise of films made for fans that include children, comes with responsibility that these now grown up nerds, had none of. Their nostalgia and chips still precariously on their shoulders would now be capitalized on in their adulthood by shows like *Stranger Things*, and *The Big Bang Theory* that whether intentional or not, deliver coded messages to their viewers as to say "remember the good ol days? Before EVERYONE liked YOUR thing? When it only belonged to you?" and almost enables further a culture of gatekeeping. MaryKate Jasper for *The Mary Sue* explains re: masculinity and this generation's fandom in *The Big Bang Theory* "Now you'd think a bunch of geeks who are regularly derided for being unmanly would be supportive of each other's insecurities – and although there are fleeting moments of compassion between the four friends, they spend much of their time mocking and humiliating each other for not living up to the manhood ideal."

It's all very ridiculous in retrospect. Video Essayist and Youtuber Patrick H. Willems is famous for coining the phrase in reference to *Star Wars* "This is a movie about space wizards intended for children". Now whether or not this writer agrees with Willems' sentiments exactly changes on a day to day basis. No, I don't agree that the intended audience is solely children, (see Obi-Wan hacking up Anakin and setting him on fire) any number of *Star Wars: Clone Wars*

(2008), the token “kids show” of the franchise features episodes diving into the graphic horror in the nature of war. But Willems’ sentiment still rings true, in that at the end of the day, it IS in fact just a movie.

In October of 2012 I sat in my living room, my Clone Troopers lined up across the coffee table, led by Jedi Generals Obi-Wan Kenobi and Mace Windu, preparing to do battle with a Separatist droid army tank fleet led by General Grievous. (Anakin Skywalker and the 501st Legion waited down the hall in my bedroom in a Republic Gunship in case reinforcements were needed). The epic battle would take place under the fall of night, as Hurricane Sandy had taken electricity away from my neighborhood for the past 2 days. As General Grievous mobilized his Battle Droids, a message came across the radio in a spooky AM static. “THIS IS CBS ” the message began out of a battery powered antenna radio “Disney said it has completed its acquisition of San Francisco-based Lucasfilm Ltd. for \$4.06 billion in cash and stock. The company said Friday that it issued 37.1 million shares and made a cash payment of \$2.21 billion to buy the maker of "Star Wars" from its sole owner, George Lucas. The Walt Disney Co. has said it will revive the "Star Wars" franchise beginning with "Episode 7" in 2015.”

This would usher in a new era of Star Wars fans. It had barely been half a decade since the last trilogy had ended, and fans between the ages 10-15 were finally starting to come into their own fandom with *Star Wars: Clone Wars*(2008) in its fourth season. They were old enough to have their own opinions and confidently enjoy the comedic genius Jar Jar Binks for what he is, instead of having hairy chested Hutts beat their chests at them on the internet, telling children they are not allowed to enjoy the 7 foot tall funny space lizard guy. In 2013, Benjamin Hart wrote for popular fan website Star Wars Underworld, “Almost every Star Wars fan can remember where they were when they heard this news. And as always, every fan made their

opinion known loud & clear. Reactions to this bombshell was all over the board, from joyous excitement, to confusion, to extreme negativity. Still, months later, anxieties run high as we await the next chapter in the Star Wars Saga.” He continued in a section labeled **"If They Don't Do _____ It's Going To Suck!"**

“Okay, now you're just being silly. It's a shame so many fans have adopted this "my way or the highway" attitude. Are you really going to write off a Movie you haven't even seen yet just because it won't feature your favorite character, or that they won't be adapting it from your favorite Comic or Novel? If you choose to degrade and bash a film that hasn't even been made yet, please, stay home in 2015. Don't watch Episode VII or any of its sequels because I don't want to hear you in 20 years talking about how Disney "raped" your childhood.” Already, the younger generations of fans raised on the prequel films were responding in defense of the new unconceived films as to prepare against the mistakes of the past repeating themselves.

In 2015, when the long awaited film *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* was finally released kicking off the “Sequel Era” or more appropriately umbrellaed under “The Disney Era” It was time for Prequel Kids, not kids anymore to pay it forward. Would we allow our fellow fans to try and tell people how to feel? We would certainly try our best, or as Yoda would have us- DO our best. *The Force Awakens*, directed by J.J. Abrams was more or less a safe rehash of the original title film of the series, setting up new characters, killing off an old one in Han Solo, and blowing up the big evil space station. Not very controversial stuff, but the increasingly elderly fans still found things to be upset about (because they were looking). There were still nitpicking fueled rants all over Youtube, Twitter, and Reddit. Many calling Abrams

“Jar Jar Abrams” as to lump in the new thing with the old thing they hated. One disgruntled fanboy in his personal blog, *Rapid Transmission*, describes Han Solo’s love for his son as “out of character” because Han is “smarter than to go into a situation like that” But this writer will refrain from commenting on that writer’s ability to relate to a character that wants to spend time with his family. “...when we catch up with him in *The Force Awakens*--his attachment to Kylo Ren doesn't make too much sense... So, when Han Solo walks across that big bridge to talk with Kylo Ren, it's completely out of his character. This is not the guy that replies "I know" to a declaration of love from Leia. Nor is this the guy that has been running away from traders that he's perpetually screwed over with bad deals or dodged payments.”

This same nitpick, that the character from the original trilogy, the legacy character, is “acting out of character” is a common unfounded criticism from older fans looking to argue and gatekeep their beloved franchise. This argument would really blow up to massive Rancor sized proportions in December of 2017 following the release of *Star Wars Episode VIII: The Last Jedi*, By Rian Johnson. Video Essayist Marcus Turner, better known as his internet personality Cosmonaut Marcus of *The Cosmonaut Variety Hour* describes how *The Last Jedi* was the most POLARIZING Star Wars movie in his video essay “*The Last Jedi- the most POLARIZING Star Wars movie*”, which he posted on December 19th 2017, just four days after the movie itself was released. “HOLY SHIT! The audience is quite literally divided..” he exclaims while he pans over evenly split movie reviews from all around the internet, including the Rotten Tomatoes Movie review website giving it a professional review score of 93% and an audience (open sourced) score of 53% . “...people either love this movie or they hate it. You either think its the best movie since *Empire (Strikes Back)* or you think Rian Johnson violated you and murdered your childhood right in front of you.” He says as Meco’s “*Star Wars and other Galactic Funk* ” plays

in the background jubilantly. Not even a full week after the film's premiere and the same toxic rhetoric from 15 years past had come out of the woodworks. Most criticisms of the film are widely considered illegitimate “its too long” “Luke would never do that because he never did that in the (non canon) comic books I read in 1986!” and of course claims that the character of Rey is “a Mary Sue”, a term often used almost like a slur in screenwriting/ movie review circles to delegitimize female characters. The argument being that Rey has an immense amount of power with little to no training, and didn't earn her power, while many counter argue that Luke Skywalker did the exact same thing 40 years earlier. These rage filled sentiments and reactions are exposted by Youtube users like the channel Mauler famous for his 3 part, 2 hour each “Last Jedi WOKE” rants, and more conservative leaning fans. The bad part about being a Star Wars fan is that Star Wars can be for anyone, and sometimes that really does mean ANYONE. Sometimes people watch movies about space nazis and dont realize theyre talking about the same stuff they believe in. These types of Youtube channels will often be filled with thumbnails toting large graphics reading “SJW’s RUIN STAR WARS” or depictions of POC characters from the franchise with the subtitles “WHY STAR WARS IS DEAD”. Most are clickbait thumbnails promising to tear apart the character Rey, or Lucasfilm president Kathleen Kennedy, but *The Big Bang Theory’s* casual misogyny and toxic masculinity has no lasting consequences. Cosmonaut Marcus ends his knee jerk reaction essay in response to the backlash with wisdom to spout. “... but I’d like to leave you with one idea. When *Empire (Strikes Back)* came out, it was met with a little bit of a mixed reception. Some critics did not really enjoy the darker tone, and they criticized the structure of the story. Some of these reviews are archived and they were pretty interesting to read. But look at *Empire* now, its seen to be the BEST one by most people. So I implore everyone to sit on *The Last Jedi* and see how it does over time.

Julia Alexander reported for Polygon on December 21st 2017, about the first mainstream occurrence of a phenomenon known as “review bombing” in which a small group of fans of a minority opinion, sway public perception of a film by organizing large groups of people, and in some cases even write programs, to review a movie in THEIR favor en masse. ”Review-bombing refers to fans spamming aggregation websites such as Rotten Tomatoes and IMDb with negative user ratings to bring down a film’s overall score. “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” and “Captain Marvel” are two prominent examples of films that were review-bombed before release. The review-bombing of “Captain Marvel” led to Rotten Tomatoes disarming user ratings until after a film opens.” as put by Zack Sharf for IndieWire. It should also be noted *Captain Marvel* specifically was review bombed by “fans” with personal vendettas against the film’s lead actress Brie Larson, for her expressing her basic views about needing more female superhero movies, and pushing back against criticisms of her character not smiling on the poster. Review bombing usually results in a professionally critic reviewed movie with a 93% ending up with a 53%. This was also later heavily utilized by DC comics “Snyderverse” fans. These are people who are die hard, fan-rage blinded lovers of director Zack Snyder’s gritty, and unrepresentative of source material adaptations of Batman, Superman, and the DC universe in general. While many critics and comic book fans credit Snyder solely for misrepresenting these heroes on screen in favor of making a cash grab blockbuster that fits his personal dark “fratty” tone, his fans successful review bombing tactics would have the uninformed believe otherwise. This results in films like *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice* to receive a critics review of 29% vs audience score 63%. Same situation for *Justice League* having a 39% to 68% ratio, and even its 4 hour director cut

Zack Snyder's Justice League getting a reasonable critics score of 71% compared to the still unsatisfied audience score of 94%. Snyder fans, the most vicious.

These review bombings are never without consequence. Often what will happen is the studios of the movies being review bombed will take seriously the minority opinion, because they successfully make their wallets hurt. The case with Snyderverse fans and DC being, they received the directors cut they demanded. For Star Wars, it resulted in the epic conclusion to the nine film saga largely being spent undoing many of the plot points mentioned in the review bombs for the previous film. Drew Taylor details every single “retcon” of *The Last Jedi* in the runtime of *Rise of Skywalker* in his article for Collider appropriately and bluntly titled “**10 Ways 'Rise of Skywalker' Says 'F**k You' to 'The Last Jedi'**”. This results in messy and not well constructed movies for the new generation as a result of the toxic minority of older fan’s selfishness.

With the main saga now complete, Disney has a full slate of television shows and movies based around new and old characters alike. Many theorize that the mix of new and old character based content might be enough to “heal the fandom” giving new and exciting properties to fans who crave more, as well as give something for the new “younglings” and “padawans” to grow up on, while giving older fan favorite characters like Boba Fett their own television shows, where the scripts might have been written by a 12 year old in 1986- but isnt that kinda the point?

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Technical Essay

This project was conceived in a world when the word “zoom” was still a meme to describe someone going really fast for no reason. As previously mentioned, this was supposed to be a play. It ended up as a documentary. The technical process was long and largely unprecedented and unexplored territory for Alexander and myself. We were however able to parlay our budding interests for film and voiceover work into a full fledged 38 minute documentary.

First, Alexander and I procured 2 ring light and tripod set ups for the both of us to use during filming. These allowed greater mobility, and more of the “homemade” filmmaking style we were interested in achieving. As soon as the decision was made to pivot to film, the homemade fan film aesthetic popular amongst Star Wars fans in the early days of Youtube was something we were interested in evoking, so having a camera standing still with no person on it would work well not only for our style, but also in accordance to the covid guidelines we were working within.

Interviews were scheduled with 7 subjects over 6 interviews. 2 subjects, Jeremy Nunez and DJ Kenter, being interviewed as a pair. While most interviews took place over zoom and were recorded through that program two more personal interviews, Alexander With his father and myself with my cousin, were recorded in person. It was important to us that in a time of disconnection, our most personal connections to Star Wars were done in person. Alexander’s father is the person who introduced him to Star Wars, and had original 1977 Kenner action figures (in the original Darth Vader carrier case) to show off on camera. For myself, my cousin, Ian and I grew up playing Star Wars everything. Being six months older than him, allegedly I

was there the day he was born on May 4th 1999, the 20th annual Star Wars Day, 15 days before the release of *The Phantom Menace*. Ian and I experienced all the joys of the Prequel Era in real time together, and without his inclusion in this project my connection to “The Force” would have felt underrepresented and inauthentic.

We also interviewed other friends of ours, all with unique perspectives on the franchise, some claiming to be more casual fans, others flying their flag as hardcore fans. The most enjoyable interview of them all was the dual interview with Jeremy and DJ. All being of similar experience as fans, it was very heartwarming to talk about the things we loved in the same way. The four of us were often finishing each other's sentences about very obscure Star Wars properties. From the realistic action figure adaptations of the animated Clone Wars (2003) line of figurines, to the silly voice of the narrator in the XBox exclusive Obi-Wan Kenobi lead video game, the four of us synergised smoothly like the arms of General Grievous in a lightsaber duel. On a very personal note, this particular interview took place very soon after I experienced the death of a very close family member, and the experience of getting to talk Star Wars for my friends was a very well needed and memorable lifting of spirits. Another incredibly unique perspective we were able to utilize was that of our project's advisor Professor David Bassuk, who was a student at Purchase College when the original movie premiered in 1977. His perspective afforded us a first hand look at the general perception of science fiction in a world pre Star Wars.

While Alexander was doing a majority of the heavy lifting on the technology side of things, my area of expertise came in handy in the form of arts and crafts. With a few carefully budgeted trips to Michaels craft store as well as our local Party City, I began work on all the practical effects and props in the true spirit of the original Star Wars trilogy. Even before we

made the pivot to zoom, one of our big sells in pitching the project is that we already had all the toys and collectibles that would act as props/costumes. That part was easy. We had all the lightsabers, helmets, onesies, capes, etc we would need. We even had our own stormtrooper in the form of a cardboard cutout named "Herman" stolen from a Vans display at a local mall in 2015. I began construction on our puppet of Yoda, the crazed senile frog like Jedi Master. I used a hollowed out foam base for the skull, and started applying layers of green, white and tan felt around it with hot glue, and patience. Some light sewing was involved for attaching the arms, which were constructed separately. The left arm, included a weathered wooden dowel, that would double not only as Yoda's walking stick, but also a puppeteering vantage point to articulate his arm motions with. The other arm would remain limp, however hollow everywhere but the small heavy weighted hand. This would allow a funny swinging and swaying effect for whenever Yoda would sharply turn on camera. All this with the wide, dilated, unshuttered eyes attached too far apart from each other on his spherical head, would lend itself all to a very unsettling yet funny depiction of the Grand Master of the Jedi Order.

For scenes involving space travel, a large background the size of two poster boards depicting a generic canvas of the cosmos was used up close, while Lego Miniatures of spaceships/characters were filmed up close, allowing the background to take up the rest of the frame.

For filming we used Alexander's iPhone 12 pro in cinematic 4k mode. This was convenient, as the footage would automatically back up into Alexander's iCloud and onto his iPad where the editing would take place. For rough cut/basic assembly, Alexander assembled all of the footage into a rough timeline along with supplemental materials like interviews, news footage etc. On a final edit day, Alexander and I spent a good deal of time cinely combing

through the rough cut and getting it to where we needed it. After the addition of unused footage, the cutting of some scenes, adding music and some archival footage to support as visual aid during the interview portions, our film was ready to screen.

Production Photos/Stills

