



Sean McKee, da Vinci's Resolve and The Force Helps '5-25-77' Screen at the George Lucas Star Wars Celebration IV Convention On Time.

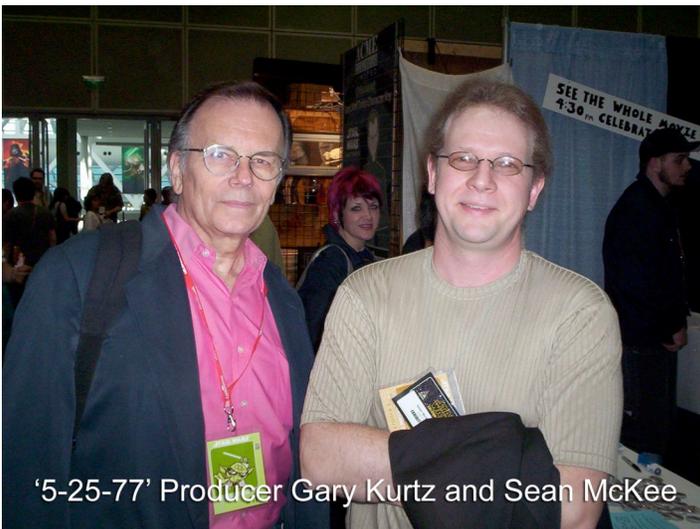
5-25-77 is both the day the original Star Wars film was released, and the title of a new coming of age feature film that has Star Wars at its heart. The film is a true story about the director, Patrick Read Johnson, who in the 70s was a teenager making movies in his backyard in Wadsworth, Illinois, population 750. Johnson dreams of going to Hollywood, working for his hero Douglas Trumbull (visual effects supervisor for 2001: A Space Odyssey), with hopes to eventually become a director himself. When his mother puts him on a plane to California, he ends up getting more than he anticipated: a brief, star struck



meeting with Trumbull, befriending Steven Spielberg on the set of 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind', and touring Industrial Light & Magic. While at ILM, Johnson was allowed to sit in the screening room and watch a rough-cut version of a film that would change the world, 'Star Wars'. In fact, he was the first fan in the world to see the movie outside of the filmmakers.

The rest of the film continues when Johnson returns to his hometown, and tries to tell everybody about 'Star Wars', and how "it will be like Woodstock when it comes out", without much response from his disbelieving, non sci-fi high school peers. Of course, the film does come out to historical fanfare, and Johnson eventually packs up his Pinto and goes to Hollywood to pursue his dreams. '5-25-77' is not a documentary, rather a full length feature with elements of comedy, drama and romance. It stars John Francis Daley, Austin Pendleton, Colleen Camp, Neil Flynn, Steve Coulter and Emmi Chen.

Johnson went on to write and direct numerous films, including his first film 'Spaced Invaders' (which Steven Spielberg help him sell to Disney), 'Dragon Heart', 'Baby's Day Out' and 'Angus'. When it came time to tell his own amazing story, Johnson was able to quickly attach producers Gary Kurtz ('American Graffiti', 'Star Wars', 'The Empire Strikes Back') and Fred Roos ('The Godfather II', 'Apocalypse Now', 'Lost in Translation') as well as well known visual effects luminaries, John Knoll from ILM, Douglas Trumbull, and others that inspired Johnson as a budding director.



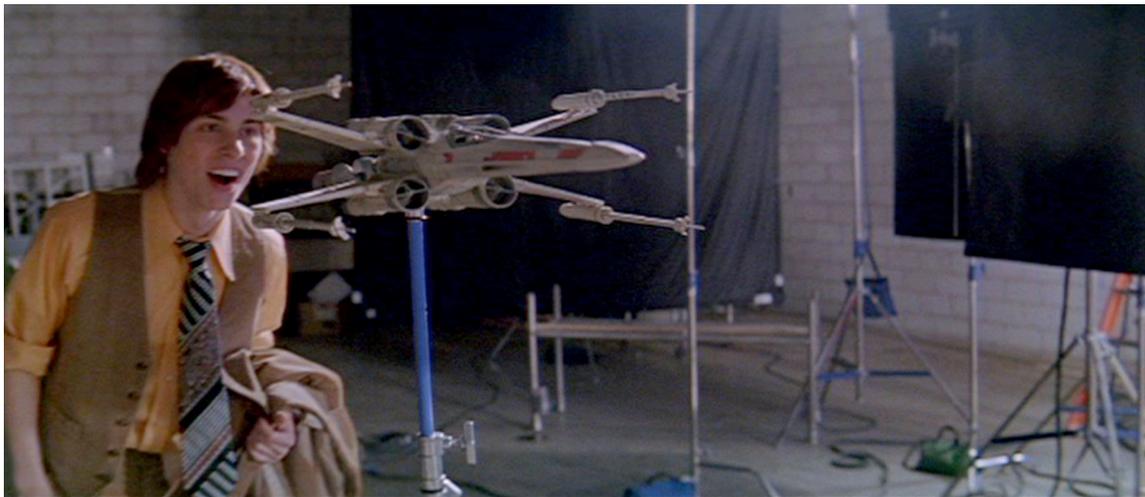
'5-25-77' Producer Gary Kurtz and Sean McKee

The film '5-25-77' is still in the final stages of post production, but when the opportunity came about to screen the film for the 30th anniversary of 'Star Wars' on May 25th, 2007 at the George Lucas Star Wars Celebration IV convention in Los Angeles, Johnson and the producers of the film wanted to present the film in its best possible light. '5-25-77' has been made mostly in Illinois, and with much of the Chicago post industry working in the commercial arena, they approached Sean McKee to color enhance the film and master it for theatrical presentation.

McKee is best known for elaborate DI film restorations as owner of Screen Time Images, located in Schaumburg, IL, 20 miles west of Chicago. Although Schaumburg is not the first place that comes to mind when one thinks of film restoration or any new film production for that matter, McKee has worked on thousands of films and television episodes, and his restoration work was shown at the 2003 Academy Awards. McKee is also an Executive Producer and acted as sales agent for several films and television shows. He was brought on as the DI Technical Advisor to '5-25-77' last year.

“The film was shot on several formats and aspect ratios, which were used to convey the location”, says McKee. “Super 16mm transferred to HD for the scenes set in Illinois, while 35mm anamorphic scanned to 2K was used for the scenes set in Hollywood. Throw in some 8mm for childhood flashbacks, and some HD footage used for pickups, and you’ve quite a mix of formats. Patrick [Johnson] wanted the framing so that the Super 16mm footage would sit in the center of the screen with pillar bars, but when the main character would fly to Hollywood (via an homage to the ending of ‘2001:A Space Odyssey’), the image would dramatically transform to full size 2:35 Cinemascope. There are also several stunning frame gags where the image would rotate in to the space where the pillar bars or letterbox is, converting to a new aspect ratio. And all this needs to work without giving special instructions to projectionists.”

McKee continues, “The opportunity to screen the film at the Star Wars convention came very close to the date, and editing and tweaks were being completed up until the final hour. The film was being edited offline from DVCAM dailies, in a 4x3 letterbox format. The film was to be shown in the Celebration Stage, at the L.A. Convention center, which was converted to a 900-seat theater with a Christie CP2000 digital cinema projector. There was no time to re-render all effects and do an online conform, so I was asked to color the film and to reformat the 4x3 offline for theatrical framing, and upconvert the whole movie from 24P DV to HD D5. The movie was to be shown at 4:30 P.M., on Friday May 25, 2007, and I was just starting to receive the first reels on Tuesday afternoon, just three days before, with the last reels coming in on Thursday, the day before the screening.”



To achieve the impossibly tight deadline, McKee chose to use the da Vinci Systems Resolve color enhancement and mastering system. Quicktime files were delivered and then converted to 10 bit RGB DPX files for use in the Resolve. Since reels were delivered out of sequence, different project files were created for each reel, and the Resolve enabled McKee to quickly reference looks created in other reels, and reuse those looks in similar scenes in other reels. “The speed and familiarity of the Resolve was key in being able to quickly get a balance throughout the film, with enough flexibility to dial in and achieve a unique feel for each scene in a short amount of time.” notes McKee.

While many people would think to use a standalone box for upconversion from DV to HD 1080P, McKee chose to use the upconversion features in the Resolve system, made possible by the proprietary Transformer board in the system. According to McKee, “While one may never say that an upconversion looks better than the original source, to say it looks just as good is pretty damn impressive. The quality of

the realtime format conversions built in to the Resolve is unmatched in the industry. During the screening, when the aspect converted to fill the entire theater screen for the Hollywood sequences, the director looked at me and smiled, while Gary Kurtz and I were at the projection site, and we all agreed it looked just amazing.”



The screening was a sold-out, overwhelming success, and ‘Star Wars’ fans and sci-fi fans and film industry folks were treated to some rare-behind-the-scenes footage from the making of ‘Star Wars’, a recreation of the ILM facility, while actual props, models and drawings were used in the scenes recreating the set of ‘Close Encounters’. The following day, a Q&A session was held in the theater with Johnson, Kurtz, Roos, cast and select crew.

According to Producer Fred Roos, “I think that ‘5-25-77’ will be a beautiful and necessary companion piece for all the gazillions of people who’ve seen and love ‘Star Wars’. If Just one hundredth of the ‘Star Wars’ buffs alone show up to see ‘5-25-77’, it will be a very big hit in its own right.”

McKee gives thanks to energy drinks for making it possible to finish the film in short order, then flying to Los Angeles with the D5, arriving one hour before the screening. He concludes, “If I had tried this on any other system, I don’t know if we would’ve made it on time. The Force was definitely with us, but the Resolve made it all possible.”

‘5-25-77’ expects to complete post production early 2008, with an anticipated release later in the year.

More information on the film can be found at www.5-25-77.com

Sean McKee and Screen Time Images can be reached at 974 Estes Court, Schaumburg, IL 60193.
Phone # 847-534-9000. www.screentimeimages.com