

Lawson's X-Wing surprise

Star Wars actor Denis Lawson told an audience at a charity sci-fi con in Edinburgh how he didn't know what an X-wing fighter looked like until he watched the movie for the first time.

The Scot, 76, is best known to millions of Sci-Fi fans as fighter pilot Wedge Antilles in the 1977 classic.

The character is seen leading the Rebel Alliance into intergalactic battle against Darth Vader and the Death Star.

He told fans at Capital Sci-Fi Con at the 02 Academy, organised by the charity Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS), that because the action was shot in blue screen, his X-Wing was a chair on an elevated raft, rocked around by studio technicians to simulate its movement.

Lawson said he only saw the result at the first screening and was "blown away".

He said: "When we shot the first film, we had no idea about green screen or blue screen.

"We just sat in the cockpits and did this stuff. We didn't know what it was we were doing until we sat and watched the first screening and it just blew you away.

"It was shot in Elstree Studios and we used to sit outside the sound stage. 1976 was a hot summer and we would sit out there in our orange jumpsuits having a laugh, messing about and then

we were called in and you would climb this ladder up onto a raft and there was a cockpit there and you sat in the cockpit.

“The camera was there and there was a guy in each corner of the raft wobbling you around. That’s how basic it was. It was a case of ‘you’re next’.

“We had no idea what blue screen was. There wasn’t even a notion of that. We were just sitting in front of a camera saying stuff.”

He added: “The battle scenes in the script were really quite long, maybe 20 pages, and I remember sitting there in the cockpit.

“George (Lucas) was by the camera. He would say my line then he’d say ‘ok, look up there and say it’: ‘look at the size of that thing’. Now look down there: ‘what’s that?’

“So you’d say the line each time in a different kind of way and he went through battle sequences like that.

“Actually it was quite a nice fresh way to work, I enjoyed that. Very spontaneous.”

Lawson was among stars who turned out at the O2 Academy in Edinburgh for Sci-Fi Con 2024, organised by the charity CHAS.

Speaking at the event, he revealed he won the role in Star Wars by chance – because he looked and sounded similar to another actor who was originally chosen for the part.

He said: “My involvement with Star Wars was kind of random. That summer I was filming in France a bit and I’d already met George and nothing had happened. I came back and suddenly I got a call to do this Star Wars thing.

“They cast another actor in that role and I think they shot a couple of scenes with him.

“I looked a little bit like him – that’s how random this is – and I don’t know why he didn’t work out but he didn’t work out so they had to bring someone in to keep the voice consistent through two actors.

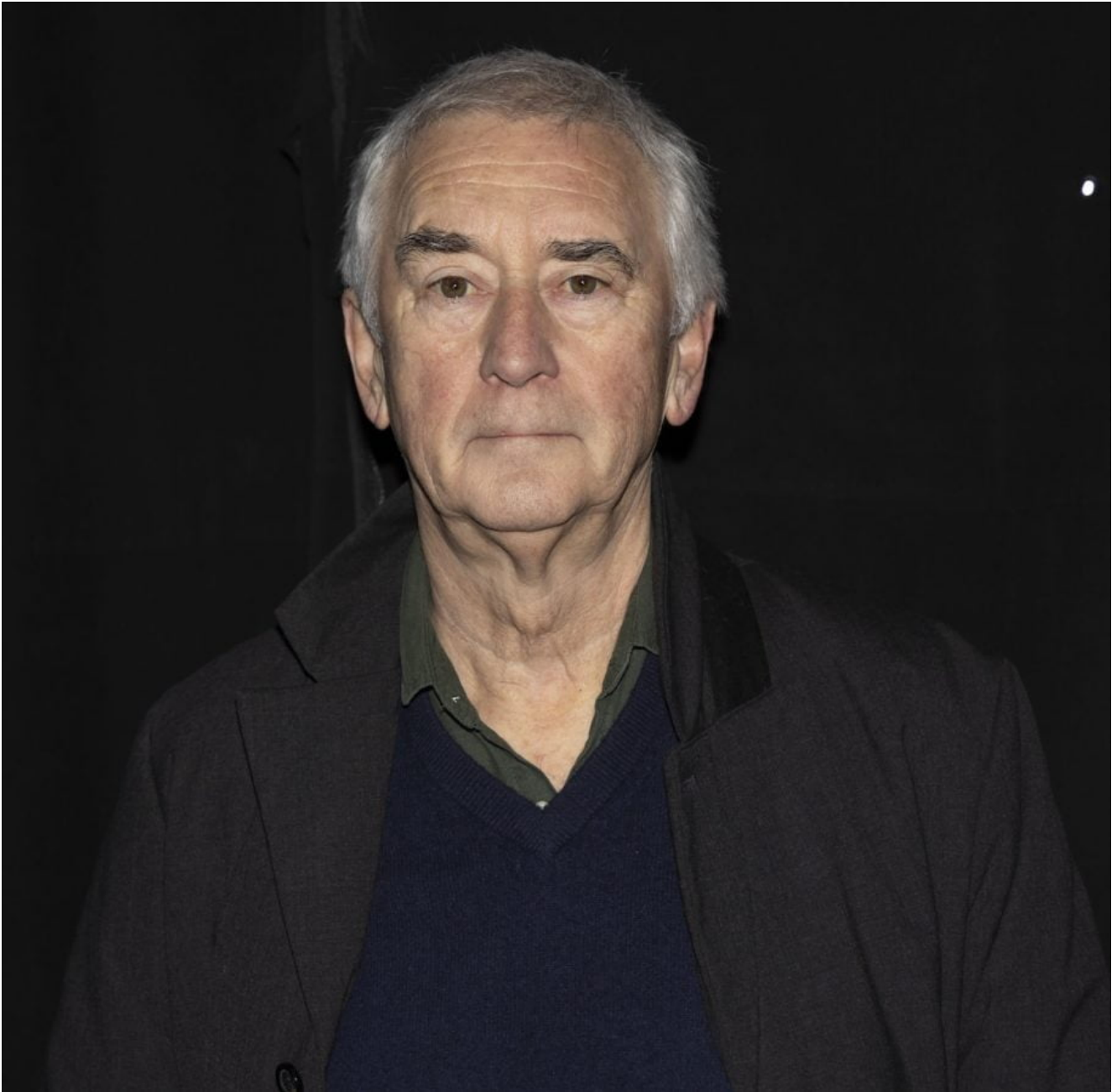
“I didn’t really think too much about it at the time.”

Lawson, uncle of Obi Wan Kenobi actor Ewan McGregor, later reprised the role of Wedge Antilles in *The Rise of Skywalker* in 2019.

He said: “It was lovely. My appearance was quite short. I was very very busy. I was in the theatre doing a play and then I was directing a play and I got this email from JJ Abrams direct to me, and that just doesn’t happen. I rang my agent and said ‘is this a wind up, is this real?’

“They checked and said it is him so I replied. They wanted me to do five days on the movie but I said ‘I’m doing this and that’.

“They said there’s no way we can do it. I jumped up and down and said ‘come on we’ve got to do this’, so they managed to just carve one day out the schedule so that I could jump in and do it, and it was just lovely to get back. It was great, I loved it.”



17/2/2024 Picture Alan Simpson Corn Exchange Edinburgh Comicon
• Star Wars legend Denis Lawson



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CHAS families – the Norquoy and the Rutherfords with stars

- Raiders of the Lost Ark favourite Paul Freeman
- Star Wars legend Denis Lawson
- Star Trek star David Ajala
- Eighth Doctor Who, Paul McGann
- Power Ranger Steve Cardenas.

Arti Shaw

The Con's loyal ambassadors James Mackenzie (aka Raven) and Jimmy Vee and Angus MacInnes (of Star Wars fame) were in attendance.

Boy on left is Eoin Norquoy with his sister Kyra, his Granny Mandy Bryce, her partner Karen Goldie and other family members Kyle Norquoy and Shannon Williamson.

Boy on right is Quintin Rutherford with sister Anita and mum

and dad Jennifer and Alasdair.



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