

# Rapid #: -11678210

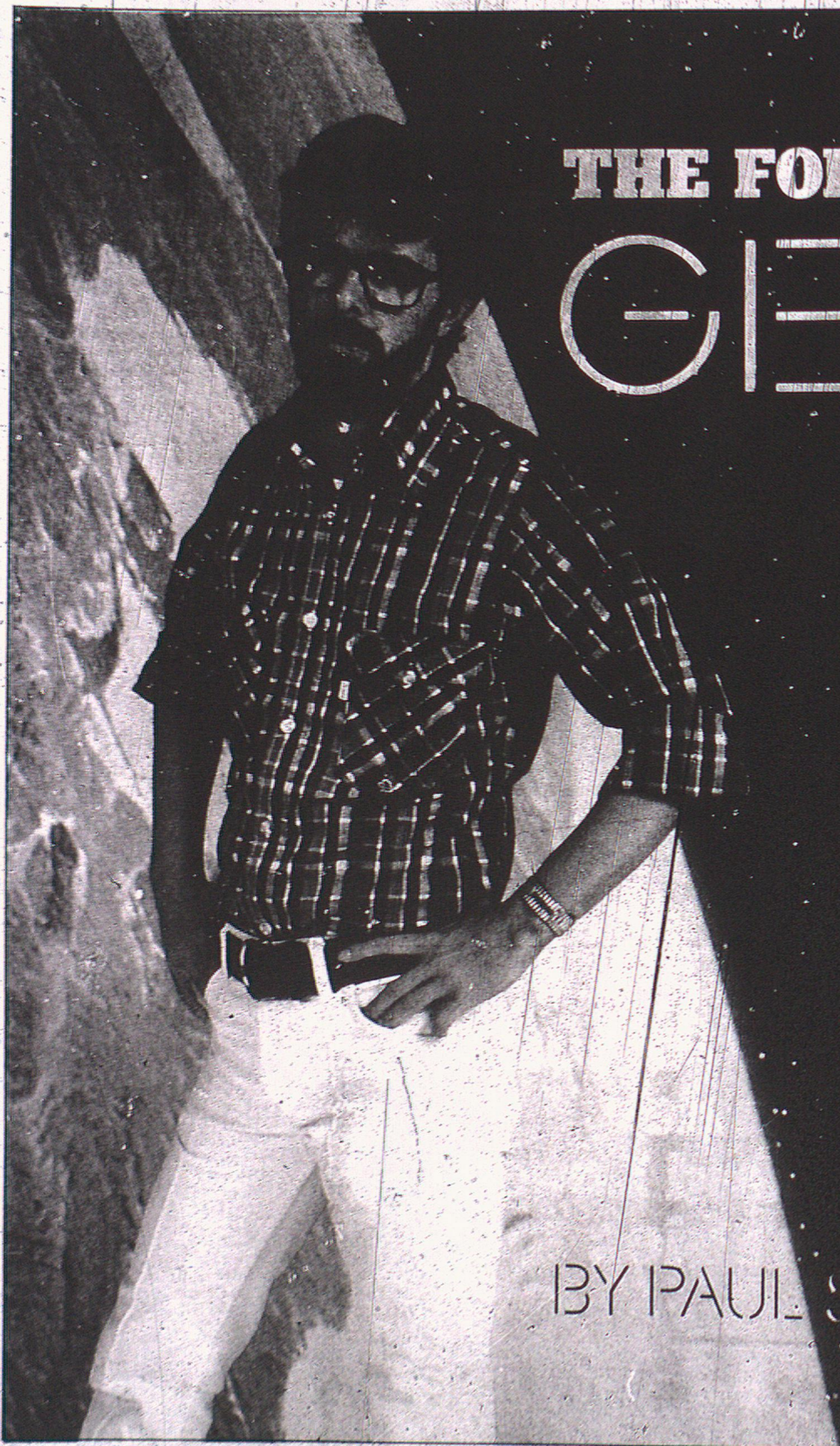
CROSS REF ID: **180644**  
LENDER: **COC :: Tutt Library**  
BORROWER: **VZS :: Scribner Library**  
TYPE: Article CC:CCL  
JOURNAL TITLE: Rolling stone  
USER JOURNAL TITLE: Rolling Stone  
ARTICLE TITLE: "The Force behind George Lucas"  
ARTICLE AUTHOR: Scanlon, Paul  
VOLUME: Unknown  
ISSUE: August 25, 1977  
MONTH:  
YEAR: 1977  
PAGES: p. 40, 11 pp. photograph (not  
ISSN: 0035-791X  
OCLC #:

Processed by RapidX: 3/22/2017 2:53:43 PM



This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)

---



# THE FORCE BEHIND GEORGE

BY PAUL SCARFONE

# GEORGE LUCAS

**A Conversation with  
the Creator of 'Star Wars'...  
Who Reveals the Voice  
behind Darth Vader,  
Why Robots Need Love Too  
and Where Wookies  
Come From**

One sunny spring afternoon last year, an old friend and fellow movie buff drove me to an inconspicuous two-story warehouse in Van Nuys, California. The building was headquarters for Industrial Light and Magic, an organization of young technicians charged with the responsibility of creating special visual effects for 'Star Wars,' writer/director George Lucas' \$9.5-million space fantasy.

Lucas and the principal unit had just started shooting in Tunisia, but the activity around ILM that day was so intense you'd have thought the film was opening in a month or two. Modelmakers were hard at work putting the finishing touches on miniature spacecraft (chiefly by cannibalizing store-bought model kits); a team of animators was hard at work on prototype effects; the explosives people were worrying about upcoming tests and everyone was fussing over the camera that John Dykstra and his technicians had constructed—from scratch—to shoot the space sequences.

Dykstra, the film's special photographic effects supervisor, who had worked previously with Douglas Trumbull ('2001: A Space Odyssey'), led a bunch of us upstairs to a makeshift screening room littered with chairs and a couple of old overstuffed sofas. One of the young animators had just completed a series of laser blasts for Dykstra's approval. The room went dark and we watched the "lasers" light up the screen. The better ones were greeted with applause; the most spectacular ones got cries of "Wowie!" "Whoopee!" and "Far out!"

Later, I was peering at some storyboards—sequential pen-and-ink illustrations—of a planned space battle scene. Several shots featured a hairy creature with enormous teeth apparently at the controls of a spacecraft. "What's that?" I asked a passing technician. "A Wookiee, of course," she replied, and continued walking without further explanation.

Even back then it was pretty easy to see that this young and gifted crew was fired up by George Lucas' peculiar vision and exceptional imagination. He says that all of his films are characterized by "a sort of effervescent giddiness." Whatever you want to call it, it's a quality that seems to affect the people who work for him and audiences alike. His first feature film, 'THX 1138,' was technically brilliant but no crowd-pleaser. Still, it has attained cultish status and has consistently done well through campus rentals over the past few years. Then came 'American Graffiti,' George's paean to the Class of '62, cruising and rock & roll. Made for \$750,000 with a small crew and a 28-day shooting schedule, it has become the 11th-largest grosser. And in case you've been asleep for the past couple of months, or on Mars, George Lucas' third feature, 'Star Wars,' will certainly hit the Top Ten and may well become the biggest grosser ever. Within eight weeks it had taken in \$54 million at the box office. George's novelization of the script, released without fanfare by Ballantine Books last winter, was last seen reaching Number Four on the mass-paperback charts, with 2 million copies now in print. And the posters, T-shirts, models, masks of the main characters and more books are on their way; the soundtrack album is already gold. Not bad for a film that almost never got off the ground in the first place, and was an unknown quantity almost right up to the release date.

When I visited the set in London later that spring, there was a notable lack of









