

• ISSUE 34

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MAGAZINE



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

GET READY FOR
STAR WARS
THE FORCE AWAKENS!
WITH
JEREMY BULLOCH & BRIAN MUIR

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HANDGUNS **CANE HILL** **THE ECHO AND THE ALWAYS** **SEAWAY**

FEATURED: SEAN MURRAY • LUKE BARNES • RYAN GAGE • KIRAN SHAH • STEVE DICKSON

KIRAN SHAH



“As an actor/stuntman he has been a part of a long list of impressive film franchises such as The Chronicles of Narnia, The Lord of the Rings, Indiana Jones, Star Wars, Aliens, and MORE! So read on as we find out what this incredible career has been like for Kiran Shah!”

When did you first realize that acting/stunts was what you wanted to do as a career?

In Kenya, when I was six we used to take the mick out of my uncle by copying his walk and mannerisms and exaggerating it to make it funnier. The people on my street used to laugh at this and asked me again and again to copy him. This is when I realized I wanted to be an actor, at this point I had no plans to be a stuntman.

What was your first major project, and what was that whole experience like for you?

I was working in fringe and experimental theatre as a mime, mask and movement artist, when in 1976 I started work on my first major project which was a film called ‘Candlehoe’. I was working as a stand-in for a young girl when I was spotted by stunt-coordinator Bob Anderson. He asked me to do all the stunts for the girl. During filming at Pinewood studios I was approached by a producer called John Dark. Who was making a film called ‘The people the time forgot’ he was looking for a little person to play a character called Bolum. Working on this film was an amazing experience as it taught me how making movies work. I will always remember this film as I got my two major breaks from this film.

What was it like to be Abu in Raiders of the Lost Ark, and can you tell us a bit about your time on the set for this iconic film?

In Raiders, people will always remember Abu in the scene where the monkey dies. Abu was a cook who brought in the poisoned dates. On set Steven Spielberg introduced me to all the cast members, I was pleased to work with Harrison Ford and John Rhys-Davies. They kept me entertained all day.

You also got to be an ewok on Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi, so what was that like, and again, can you tell us a bit about your time on set of this film?

On Episode VI, I was the first person to test out the Ewoks costume, I got inside the costume to see how well I could move and do stunts. I ended up doing stunts for the most of the Ewoks. I had fun swinging from one tree to another, falling, being thrown from heights and doing fights.

You got to be Blunder on Legend, so how was that, and what do you remember the most from this film?

When I started working on the film, Ridley Scott told me there were two reasons I got the character. One was at the audition I made him laugh with my mime physical character and the second was Alan Lee’s sketch of Blunder that looked like me. One of the things I will always remember is doing a scene with Alice Playten, ‘Blix’. Blix and Blunder are having a little argument when Blix starts punching Blunder who is wearing a helmet with a visor. A couple of punches caught the helmet knocking the plastics tube, which was inside the helmet connected to a dry ice canister to give a vapor effect coming out of the visor. The tube dropped on to my shoulder and gave me first-degree cold burns.

What was it like to be a part of the iconic Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, and what did you enjoy the most about acting on these epic set pieces?

I did stunts on Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. I was called in by stunt coordinator Greg Powell to do a stunt for a Goblin. It was really good to be on such magical sets.

How did you end up working on Space Precinct, and how does a TV show compare to working on a movie?

I got a call to do an episode to play a girl character in a prosthetic mask. I was asked to do two more episodes playing different child characters. TV shows are fast moving as they have a smaller time scale than shooting a movie.



“It was really good to be on such magical sets”

You went on to be Ginarrbrik in The Chronicles of Narnia, so how was that, and what was the most rewarding part about being involved with these films?

Ginarrbrik in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe was such a fun part to play. He was an evil and funny character. I was pleased that I was given some funny dialogue. The contrast between the White Witch, Tilda Swinton and Ginarrbrik was magnificent. I also wanted him to look really evil and Howard Berger's make-up worked really well. This was a rewarding part for me and I got to work with Andrew Adamson in his first film with human actors.

As well as acting, you of course do stunts! You worked as a stunt double for Elijah Wood in The Lord of the Rings, so how was that, and what was the hardest scene to shoot?

I was a scale and scale stunt double mainly for Elijah Wood in The Lord of the Rings. A scale double is not a straight body double. In pre-production I had to study and work with Elijah so that I can get his character Frodo's mannerisms and walk. I had a team of four little people, with Sean Allen we trained them to work in movement and mask. At this time a decision was made by Peter Jackson and Barrie M. Osborne that I would do all five Hobbits at any given point whichever Hobbit was leading the scene I would be that scale and stunt double Hobbit. When we started filming I would be watching the monitor looking at the lead Hobbit in the scene so that when I did that Hobbit I could get his movement and mannerisms as closely as possible. The hardest scene was with Boromir, Sean Bean, when he tried to get the ring from Frodo. It was a long set up with walking, running, falling and rolling struggling on the ground with Boromir as he tries to get the ring.

You were also a stunt double for Carrie Henn in Aliens, so what was that like, and what did you enjoy the most about working in this sci-fi world?

To work with James Cameron on Aliens was hard but good as well. I was the stunt double for Carrie Henn. The most enjoyable scene for me was as Newt being carried by Ripley, Sigourney Weaver, when she was burning the alien's eggs with a flame thrower gun in this sci-fi world.

What did you enjoy the most about being a part of one of the biggest selling films of all time, Titanic?

To be part of one of the biggest selling films of all time was fantastic and I loved working with the biggest stunt team with over one hundred stunt people (Guinness World Record) from different parts of the world all working together and supporting each other. The stunt coordinator who headed the team was Simon Crane. I did high falls into the water, sliding across the ship deck at various angles, I played the boy who was picked up by Leonardo DiCaprio, and I did the stunts for many of the child characters.

Is there anything you can tell us about your time on the upcoming film Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens? Without giving any spoilers of course.

I had a fantastic time working on Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens. It was so good to work with J.J. Abrams.

What else can we expect to see from you as we head towards 2016?

I have been working on a few different projects for 2016, you will all just have to wait and see!



“The hardest scene was with Boromir, Sean Bean, when he tried to get the ring from Frodo”