

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

PETER JACKSON

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Dan Madsen Founder, The Lord of the Rings Fan Club



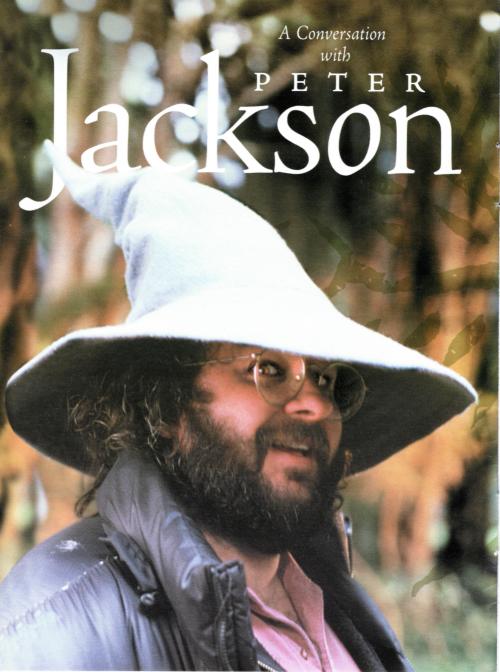
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In this special edition of The Lord of the Rings Official Movie Magazine, director Peter Jackson talks at length about the creation of the extended DVD edition of The Fellowship of the Ring.

BY DAN MADSEN

OW HAS THE ADVENT OF DVDS CHANGED FILM-MAKING? WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING A FILM NOW, WOULD YOU BE MORE APT TO GO AHEAD AND SHOOT SCENES THAT YOU KNOW MIGHT NOT MAKE THE FINAL CUT OF THE FILM BUT COULD BE INCLUDED ON A DVD?

As a concept, I would say, yes, that is certainly something that I would think about these days. In the case of *The Lord of the Rings*, we never shot anything deliberately for the DVD, though. We had a very tight schedule of shooting these movies back to back, and we really didn't want to shoot any scenes that we didn't think we needed.

However, you are getting to the point in filmmaking where you could consider doing that—but it's difficult because you would essentially have to write two scripts at the same time. You would have to have a structured movie that worked

for the theatrical release and then you would have to have an ultimate structure that worked for the DVD; it would add to the complication of filmmaking if you set out to do that. Fortunately, accidents do happen, and you do end up with a bunch of material left over at the end. Then, of course, the question becomes how much of that material, if any, do you want to have back in the movie? To release a DVD with extra scenes is not necessarily a good thingsometimes scenes are cut out because you would never want those scenes in the film.

ARE SCENES CUT OUT FOR PACING PURPOSES AS WELL?

Actually, scenes cut for pacing purposes are generally quite nice. Often, there are scenes involving intimate moments between the characters or a little bit of back-story or development and those are usually the ones that are taken out for pacing purposes. They are often the very scenes that are good to have back in the DVD because they are for the people who have seen The Fellowship of the Ring and have seen Aragorn or they have seen Legolas or Pippin or Frodo and would like to see more of them: that's what the extended edition DVD can pro-



vide. We did shoot things that we didn't put into the DVD; there are definitely more scenes from Fellowship that hit the cutting room floor and stayed on the cutting room floor. We only put in scenes that we felt actually enhanced the movie for the DVD viewing.

Can you give readers a sense of what they can expect on the Fellowship DVD?

To give you a generalization, most of the things revolve around character moments with members of the Fellowship. The interesting thing is that in many of the fan reviews of *The Fellowship* I read, one thing that some people expressed disappointment about was that the pace was so relentless. They would have liked to see more quiet moments between the characters. That's pretty much what all this extra 30 minutes sprinkled throughout the entire film is all about.

How did you go about putting the extended DVD version together?

We were actually talking about it all the way through the editing of *The Fellowship*. Whenever we would look at a version of the film, and we would sort of agonize over whether we were going to cut a scene out, we would often say to ourselves, "Well, if we cut it



"Some people expressed disappointment that the pace was so relentless. They would have liked to see more quiet moments between the characters."

out of here, it will be great for the DVD" ... which actually helps soften the blow! As a filmmaker, vou do feel a certain amount of emotional attachment to everything you've shot. You know that a two-minute scene in the movie represents a day's worth of work and that you were working very intensely with the actors to try to create the best performance and with the camera crew to get the best shots. You spend a day of your life crafting a scene, and suddenly nobody is going to see it.

When you have to cut it out, there is a certain emotional blow. I love the fact that, as long as it is a worthwhile scene, the DVD concept can actually help ease that pain.

So we had a lot of discussions as we were cutting the theatrical version as to whether or not we would definitely like to see a particular scene on the DVD. When we came to do the DVD, it was pretty simple.

This question comes from Fan Club member Nan Morris of Salt Lake City, Utah: Which of the new DVD scenes was the hardest for you to cut from the theatrical release?

There is a scene that I regret cutting, but we were under a lot of pressure from New Line to bring the film in under three hours. As it was, it was two hours, 58 minutes, so we just scraped by on that. This three-hour mark was a psychological thing-nobody wanted to say that the film was three hours long. We worked very hard to achieve that goal. The last scene that got cut—which would have tipped us over three hours—was a scene involving Viggo Mortensen's character, Aragorn, and the four hobbits in the Midgewater Marshes going through on their way from Bree to Rivendell. Then

Behind The Scenes

expanded gift-giving scene featured in the Special Extended DVD Edition of The Fellowship of the Ring may be one of the new version's most anticipated additions. New footage features Galadriel bestowing gifts on each remaining member of the Fellowship: for Aragorn, an Elvish hunting knife; Boromir, an Elven cloak; Legolas, an Elven bow; Merry and Pippin, silver belts with small daggers; Sam, a coil of Elven rope; Frodo, a phial containing the light of Earendil; and Gimli, a strand of Galadriel's hair.

The Lord of the Rings Props Master Nick Weir talked with the magazine recently about the creation of two of the gifts featured in The Fellowship of the Ring; Weir's team in the art department made the phial and the Elven rope that Galadriel gives to Frodo and Sam in the film.

How DID YOU CREATE FRODO'S PHIAL?

Through [conceptual artist] Alan Lee and [supervising art director] Grant Major, we got a basic idea or concept of what it was to look like. Then that idea was shown to Peter [lackson] and he added his input. I then had our prop designer draw various versions and got Peter's approval.

We chose from maybe a half dozen different designs, and then the actual glass phial was made for us by a glass blower. Then we made the lid, which is basically a little stopper, and our prop people very carefully put the silver on it.

We had several of the phials made up for different functions. One just had a clear liquid in it; another one had a glowing liquid-you know those sticks that you shake and they glow? We used some of that [liquid] in one of the phials. There was another one that utilized a paint that is used on road signs; it glows when light shines on it. We got some of that and mixed it up with water so that when light shone on the phial, it would glow as well.

How DID YOU COME UP WITH THE DESIGN OF SAM'S ELVEN ROPE?

We went to rope manufacturers in Auckland and got various samples of their rope-both three-ply and fourply, banded and twisted, and so forth. We played with the samples and eventually, we came up with one four-ply matted rope; the fourth ply was a silver strand to make it look like more than the usual rope thread. Up close, it appears as if it has a twist of silver running through it.

What do you enjoy most ABOUT The Lord of the Rings AND ASSIGNMENTS LIKE THIS

Just the challenge of bringing a film like this to life. It requires hundreds and hundreds of people and everything has to work-from the acting and costumes right down to the props that each character uses. It is by far the most complicated film I have ever worked on!





there is a scene at night where Viggo is sitting by the campfire by himself and the hobbits are sleeping. That was about a three-minute sequence that stayed in right up until the last minute. It was a scene that the film would ultimately be okay without, but it does nice things for Aragorn's character. That was probably the hardest for me to see cut out.

Can you talk about the Significance of the Scenes with Galadriel's gifts in The Fellowship of the Ring?

The significance is really in The Two Towers and The Return of the King. The reality that we

found—and the reason why the scenes were cut—is that it is a reasonably long sequence. Obviously, when you are giving gifts to most of the Fellowship, it takes some time to go through them one at a time. It has a certain pacing quality that doesn't allow you to do it quickly. It has to have a rhythm that is suitable for the moment; therefore, it ends up being a little long and a little slow. We had the problem, of course, that these gifts that they are given have a part to play in the subsequent movies, but they really don't in The Fellowship. We were now into our final act of The Fellowship, and heading toward our

climax. It became a bit of a problem to stop the film for this gift-giving scene. That was actually a conversation I had with New Line at the time because we all recognized what the problem was. To be honest, that gift-giving scene dictated the date that the extended edition DVD was going to be released. I said to New Line, "Look, I will cut the gift-giving scene out but you realize there are gifts that they are given that they use in The Two Towers. I will be prepared to take it out as long as you can guarantee and promise to me that you will release the extended DVD before the release of The Two



Towers." They went away and came back and said, "If we promise to do a November release so that the fans and people who are interested have a month to buy and to look at the extended DVD before they go into The Two Towers, is that okay?" And I said, "Sure, that would work." They had to guarantee me that people would be able to see it in place in The Fellowship before they went to see The Two Towers in theaters in December.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOU INSERTED THE NEW SCENES IN THE DVD CUT INSTEAD OF TACKING THEM ON AS A "DELETED SCENES" CHAPTER?

I don't really like just adding the scenes as a "Deleted Scenes" chapter. Sometimes it is interesting to look at that, but I think it's a bit of a drag; they ultimately don't mean anything if they're not in the context of the film. Their impact and their significance are much more reduced and they become a novelty-a little bit of a gimmick for the DVD packet.

We're doing something that is obviously very different. We're doing it because these scenes fit perfectly well—and belong—in the film. They are not scenes to be embarrassed about; they are not scenes that have to stay on the cutting room floor. We have gone to a lot of trouble—believe me, a huge amount of trouble to put this material back into the movie. We've had to do another 38 special effects shots—in other words, Weta, in addition to commencing work on The Two Towers, was working on another 38 The Fellowship of the Ring shots, such as the Cave Troll and various establishing shots, to finish extra scenes. There are so many effects in the film that you can't put 35 minutes of material back in the movie without it containing effects shots. Of course, Howard Shore has composed new pieces of music; new score music being written for new DVD scenes is something that's probably never happened before. I can't imagine that ever occurring because, normally, if you were putting some footage back into a film, you would take a piece of music from somewhere else in the movie and recycle it over a new scene. But with 35 minutes of footage, we just felt we couldn't do that. We couldn't repeat 35 minutes of the music twice, so we thought it was much better to write fresh material. Fortunately, the studio supported us.

For more of Peter Jackson's commentary on The Lord of the Rings Motion Picture Trilogy, join The Lord of the Rings Fan Club and begin receiving the fan club's bimonthly Official Movie Magazine! For more information, go to www.lotrfanclub.com.



"Then there is a scene where Viggo is sitting by the campfire by himself and the hobbits are sleeping. That was probably the one that was the hardest for me to see cut out."



For moviegoers, the appearance of the Dark Lord Sauron in the prologue of The Fellowship of the Ring was one of the film's biggest surprises. Weta Workshop's physical-effects wizard Richard Taylor—who was honored in March with two Academy Awards for his work on The Fellowship of the Ring—talked with the magazine earlier this year about the creation of Sauron.

SHINGING FOLLEF

BY FRANCIS K. LALUMIÈRE

Bringing Tolkien's Dark
Lord to life for The
Lord of the Rings was particularly challenging for the
Weta Workshop design team,
says Richard Taylor, because
Sauron's essence is not physical
but emotional.

In Tolkien's books, Sauron represents"the greed of material wealth, the desire to control... power," Taylor explains. "[It's as if] Sauron is an emotional state, a feeling that people would have within themselves." And how can one translate that feeling into a physical presence for film?

"It was an absolute given that we had to, in some way, create the [physical] entity that is the ultimate evil of Middle-earth," he says. "It had to be medieval. It couldn't be science fiction-based and it couldn't be in any way overly fantastical because it would break out of the specific design motifs that we were trying to stick to. It would have been a failure for us if we had tried to produce high-realism armor and weapons for the film, only to go and have Sauron appear as some grandiose fantasy-based character."

FORGING THE ARMOR

A team of Weta Workshop designers collaborated to create Sauron's original steel suit of armor. "The task of designing Sauron mainly fell on Warren Mahy," Taylor says. Mahy first created a series of illustrations, and then transformed them into three-dimensional preliminary models. "I think we did about half a dozen sculptures of Sauron before we began to get something close to... Peter [Jackson's] vision of the character," says Taylor. In the end, there were probably more than 150 to 200 separate, individually crafted components.

Weta's Stu Johnson was in charge of building the suit of armor. "It was a huge endeavor," says Taylor. "It took him three and a half, maybe four, months, with a team of two people helping him." The suit of armor was beaten out of plate steel that was forged in the foundry. "The more complex forms were beaten using

a technique very rarely used today, where we actually heat up a very thick, black tar in a crucible," explains Taylor. "Into that tar we beat the more dramatic forms of the armor. That gives us the ability to mold [the metal] like wet leather. Primarily, the scalloping on the shoulder sections is all done with black pitch forging."

Simultaneously, Warren Mahy was developing the intaglio surfacing for the armor."I wanted the feeling that the suit of armor was crawling with a sort of poison ivy," says Taylor. "We created a graphic, and through a screenprinting process, we were able to process the graphic onto the surface of the armor." In the end, he says, "you're left with a beautiful, crisp intaglio, acid-etched into the surface of the steel."

FROM STEEL TO STUNTS

Components in hand, Weta set about assembling the armor with leather strapping, which is an undertaking in its own right, Taylor says. The gauntlets alone have about 35 moving parts.

There were other elements of Sauron's appearance to consider, too. Weta created chain mail to be worn under the suit, a cloak, weapons, and a helmet. "The helmet was a very tricky thing," Taylor says. "We wanted to catch a feeling of animosity and aggression, while not making it look too fantastical. Once

again, it could have looked too cartoon-y. We based it very strongly on the [look] of a horse's skull, with those long slits that you get down the front of a horse's skull."

Despite the meticulous planning and craftsmanship, it was the stunt replicas that were onscreen during most of the scenes: the steel suit of armor was barely used in the filming, Taylor says. "It's only really used for non-moving 'hero' shots, because it's just too dangerous for the actor inside the suit (if he fell over in it)," he explains, "but more importantly, it's too dangerous for those around him, like the stunt fighters."

Creating Sauron's weapons was just as complicated as creating the suit of armor. "Sauron carries a dagger and also a mace," says Taylor. "Once again, they were all designed by Warren Mahy, hand-ground out of plate aluminum by Peter Lyon, and then siliconmolded and replicated in skateboard-wheel rubber, the material we used for replicating weapons. And the molding process for something like the mace was immensely complex,

requiring

multiple-

part molds to

catch the com-

plex structure of

the head of the

AN IMMENSE PRESENCE

With all of Sauron's "attire" complete, it was time to bring him to life.

The Dark Lord was portrayed by "a young chap called Sala Baker, a stunt actor on the film," Taylor says. "He had an immense presence on the set, and a great ability to show power and character in a sort of extroverted manner."

"Sala is tall but not that tall," Taylor says of the 6-foot-1-inch actor, who spent about 25 minutes suiting up for his Sauron scenes. "And of course Sauron needed to look as though he were nine or 10 feet tall so that he would have this huge might above all the other people." Camera angles and blue-screen compositing were used in some cases to create Sauron's largerthan-life appearance. "I think

there are a couple of

shots where Sauron

may have been refab-

ricated as a digital

character," Taylor says. "But primarily it's all an actor in a suit, using forced-perspective camera angles and tricky camera moves, which worked very well."



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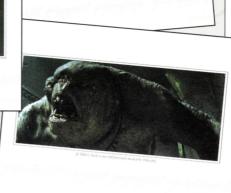
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