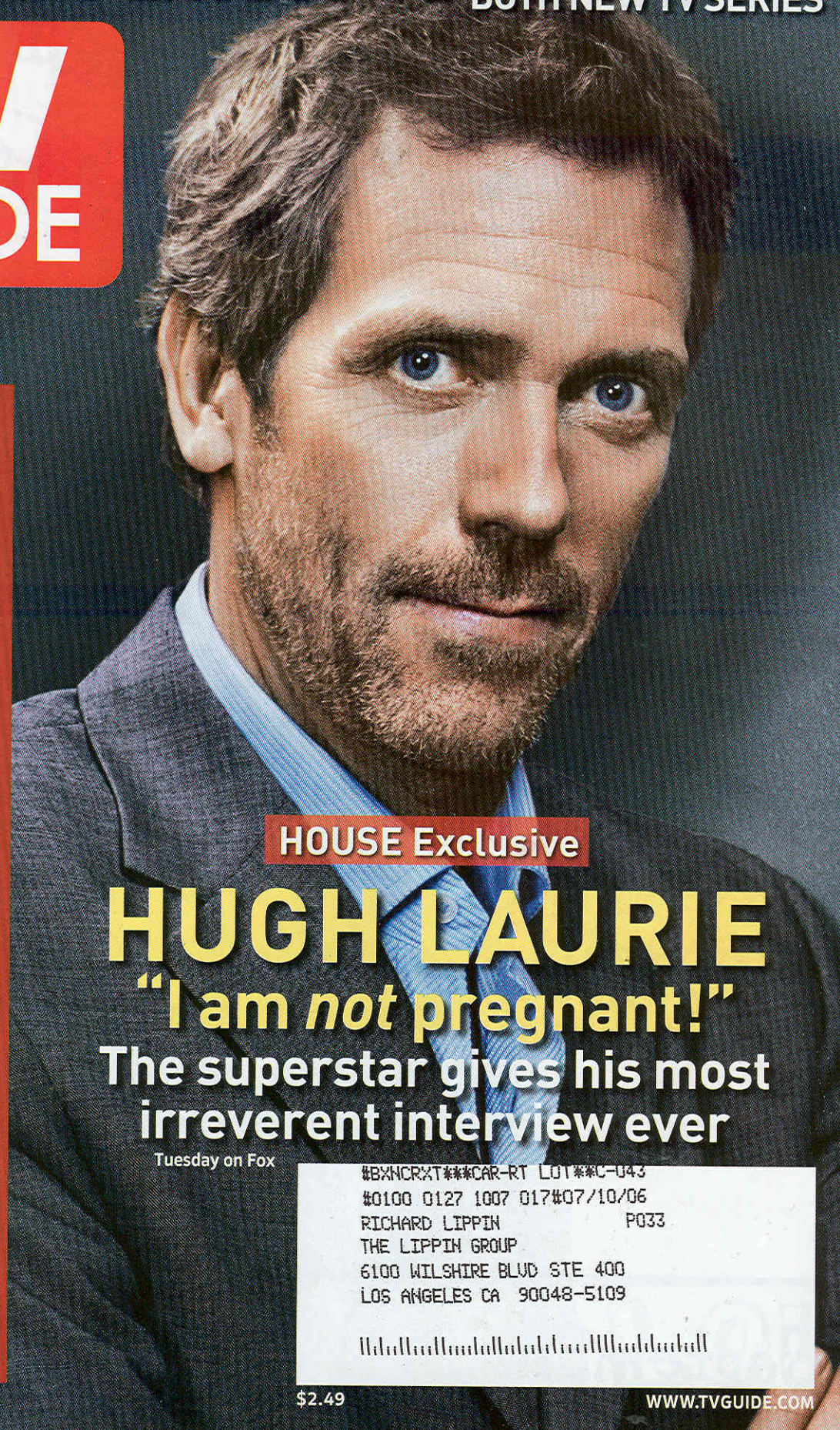
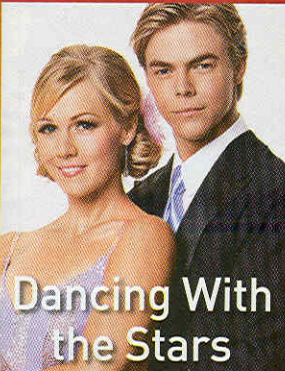


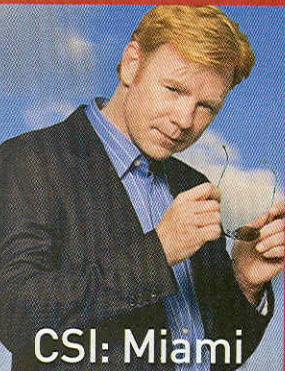
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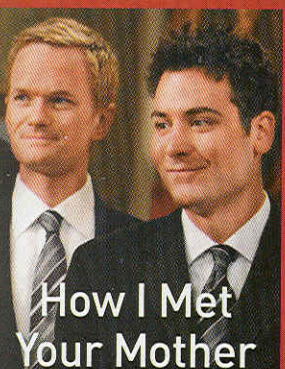
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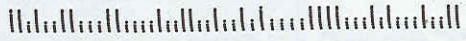
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Tuesday, September 18, 2007

### George Lucas Hails *Maverick* Filmmakers, Teases *Indy 4* by Steve Sonsky

George Lucas is feeling good about television. In his life post-*Star Wars* franchise, the legendary writer, director, producer, special-effects czar and mega-mogul is still embracing his legacy — the far-far-away galaxy he created for six films that changed the cinematic universe and became a part of world pop culture. But now a new medium will bear the message. In a conversation with TV Guide executive editor Steve



George Lucas

Sonsky that began with a discussion of *Fog City Mavericks*, a Starz documentary (premiering Monday, Sept. 24, at 9 pm/ET) about the history of San Francisco-based filmmakers like himself, Francis Ford Coppola and Clint Eastwood, Lucas also held forth on the status of his two forthcoming television series that will expand the *Star Wars* saga, his own TV-watching habits, the Internet culture, and why it turned out OK that Sean Connery wouldn't reprise his role as Harrison Ford's dad in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, scheduled for release next May. Here is Part 1 of that conversation.

**TV Guide: So, *Fog City Mavericks* — a wonderful couple of hours. It was great fun to watch.**

**George Lucas:** I'm a firm believer in regional cinema, cinema that's not made by people who live in Hollywood but who live in [places] like Austin or New York City or Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco. There are several little film communities that exist outside the main center, Hollywood, and who take their ideas from different places and do different kinds of things and have more of a creative say in what they do. This film is about San Francisco. I hope, at some point, somebody makes one about New York and Austin and all of the other places.

**TV Guide: It seems almost as much an homage to San Francisco as it does to all of you, the filmmakers. It paints a great portrait of the city as an incubator for artistic individuality.**

**Lucas:** Well, yeah, the thing most people don't understand is that San Francisco has a long tradition of making films, not just having films shot here but actually [hosting] an indigenous film industry. It's very, very small, but the people who live and work here have a different outlook and get their ideas from different sources, and [so] the films come out differently. I think [*Mavericks*] clarifies that some of the more successful films that have come out of Hollywood actually haven't been made in Hollywood.

**TV Guide: What do you think it is about San Francisco that makes that happen? There's a fun quote in the film from [*Toy Story* director] John Lasseter — who says it's the great food, it's the great wine — but, more seriously, there's also a lot of discussion obviously of the spirit of independence and the nonconformist ethic of San Francisco.**

**Lucas:** Well, yeah. We're free of the institution, the institutionalized creative system, which means that we've been able to do things pretty much on our own without much interference. And even when things do get assigned to us, we still

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have a very independent way of looking at things. Everyone here kind of thinks outside the box, and Hollywood is the box.

**TV Guide: Could you ever do good work in Los Angeles — or do you think it's just not your nature?**

**Lucas:** It's not my nature. I've never worked down there, and I don't see any reason why I ever would.

**TV Guide: So what lessons would you impart to young artists trying to fight authority?**

**Lucas:** Well, it's not a matter of fighting authority. It's a matter of realizing that you don't have to go to Hollywood to make movies. A lot of independent filmmakers around this country make movies in their hometowns. You know, there's like a thousand independent films made every year. Not that many of them make it into the mainstream, and what [*Mavericks*] is about is the ones that *do*. This is about how even the most mainstream of movies can be made outside the system. And, for a lot of the independent filmmakers who are working outside the system and working all around the country, I think the message of the [documentary] is to stay there. If you become successful, if you make a movie that actually hits the mainstream, that becomes successful, don't move. Stay home. Work out of your own background. Work out of your own milieu. Work out of your own history.

**TV Guide: Who are the young filmmakers you see out there, the regional filmmakers who you think are particularly doing wonderful stuff that should be noticed?**

**Lucas:** That's one of those things like, "What's your favorite film?" Whoever I say, somebody else is going to say, "Why didn't you mention me?" [*Laughs*]

**TV Guide: Yeah, it's a loaded question, I know. Come on.**

**Lucas:** There are a lot. There are some great filmmakers who are working, and you see them at Sundance every year, and the problem there is people sort of get sucked into the system and then they lose their voice. And my plea is for them to stay outside the system and try to work out of their heart instead of out of their pocketbook. Because ultimately, if you're good at it... Those of us in San Francisco and New York and Austin, especially, we've done financially fine. We're not sacrificing anything by not working down there.

**TV Guide: Yeah, I think you've done OK, George.**

**Lucas:** Yeah, and so have Francis [Coppola] and John Lasseter.... If you've got the talent and you can tell a story, you'll do fine. And if you want to be personal and esoteric and not go to a mass market, then you will struggle to tell your story, which is equally valid. But to go and get paid a lot of money not to tell your story is definitely not what you want to do.

**TV Guide: As the documentary unfolds, telling the history of San Francisco filmmaking, there are some just amazing parallels — your nearly fatal car accident at 18 and the nearly fatal stagecoach accident of [motion-picture camera inventor] Edward Muybridge put each of you on new paths that maybe wouldn't have been the case otherwise, as filmmakers.**

**Lucas:** [*Laughs*] Well, life throws you funny curves, and you can either look at it as a detour, or you can look at it as an opportunity. In both cases, we reassessed our priorities, which people do when they're in those kinds of life-and-death situations. You end up doing what's more in your heart, what you actually want to do rather than what you think you have to do, because you have a feeling that you're kind of on borrowed time and you don't want to waste it.

**TV Guide: Do you still have that feeling at this point in your life?**

**Lucas:** I still feel very lucky about what happened and grateful that I managed to survive and have a life after that. And so I try to make the most of every day, and I have ever since then. I was basically putzing around, not doing anything. It sort of said, "Hey, wake up and make something out of your life because it may be over before you think."

**TV Guide: More amazing serendipity in the history of San Francisco filmmakers: If *THX 1138* [Lucas' ambitious 1971 box-office failure, which nearly bankrupted his friend and producer Francis Coppola's American Zoetrope studio] was a hit, Coppola might not have made *The Godfather*.**

**Lucas:** [*Laughs*] Possibly, yeah. You know, you sort of have to look at opportunities and sometimes things come along and you sort of, even though you want to reject them outright, you have to look at the other side of it. Fortunately, in terms of *The Godfather*, Francis would never have done that just for the money, no matter what. He had to find something that he loved about it.

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He had to find the hook that would get him into it, to say, "How can I make this mine? I know something about Italians, I know something about the Mafia and I know something about family" — and those are things that really interested him. And so he turned it into *his* movie. And you know, it's different than the book, and obviously he had to fight very hard against the system to do that. Fortunately, he managed to survive and overcome all of the influences. That was literally going to be a very cheap gangster movie starring Kirk Douglas, and he made it something extraordinary.

**TV Guide: Do you ever see you and Francis working together again?**

**Lucas:** You never know. We're all kind of loose. We help each other out, basically. And you know, we obviously are friends and communicate with each other. So there's no formal reality to all of it. It's just basically what happens when people are friends and hang out together.

**TV Guide: Speaking of friends working together... you and Steven Spielberg — how's *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* going?**

**Lucas:** Very well. Very well indeed.

**TV Guide: Were you disappointed about Sean Connery not coming out of retirement to play Indy's father?**

**Lucas:** No, in the end, it turned out better. In the beginning, he was just in a little bit of it, and I think with the strength of Sean Connery, people would've wanted him to go all the way through the whole thing, and the story really didn't work that way. And so I think there would've been some disappointment that [his character] dropped out partway through the movie. By having somebody else fill that role, you lose him without any regret, so to speak, even though we got a great actor to play the part. And I mean, he's not his father, so it's much easier....

**TV Guide: You mean [the other actor] is not playing Indy's father?**

**Lucas:** That's right. It's just a completely different character, so you're not invested in him in any way. The fact that that character, after the first part of the movie, isn't needed doesn't become a problem. Whereas I think with the scene we had, where [Indy] says goodbye to his dad, everybody was, "Wait a minute! Isn't he coming back?" So in the end, I think it turned out for the best. Sean just retired and he wants to stay retired, and I understand that. [*Laughs*] I think he just said, "Look, I've done it, I've done it." He was very tempted, you know, and we talked for a long time. But in the end, he just said, "Eh, I'm playing golf."

**TV Guide: Anything about the film that's been out there, wrong Internet buzz, that you want to correct?**

**Lucas:** Well, I don't really read the Internet buzz.

**TV Guide: Probably healthy.**

**Lucas:** Yeah, I don't get involved in all that. A film is what it is. And you know, I think it's turned out well. It's very funny, it's very exciting, and it's everything that the other ones were. I can't wait to see it! [*Laughs*]

Coming Thursday in TVGuide.com Interviews & Features: George Lucas shares an in-depth update on the two upcoming *Star Wars* TV series and laments the loss of one of his favorite TV programs.

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