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"I'm George Lucas": A Connor Ratliff Story

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"I'm George Lucas": A Connor Ratliff Story

Abstract

This is a film review of *"I'm George Lucas": A Connor Ratliff Story* (2024), directed by Ryan Jacobi.

Keywords

Star Wars, Fandom

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Author Notes

John Lyden is the Department Chair and Blizek Professor of Religious Studies at University of Nebraska Omaha. He has been the Editor of the *Journal of Religion & Film* since 2011. He is the author of *Film as Religion: Myths, Morals, and Rituals* (NYU Press), and the editor of the *Routledge Companion to Religion and Film* and co-editor (with Eric Michael Mazur) of the *Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture*. He also co-edited, with Ken Derry, *The Myth Awakens: Canon Conservatism, and Fan Reception of Star Wars* (Wipf and Stock 2018).



"I'm George Lucas": A Connor Ratliff Story (2024), dir. Ryan Jacobi

When Connor Ratliff decided in 2014 that he wanted to host a talk show as George Lucas, he wasn't sure anyone would be interested, nor was he expecting it to be a great success. He has been a *Star Wars* fan since he was a child, however, and he enjoyed impersonating Lucas. Not sure if he could do a whole show alone, however, he came up with the idea of a live talk show with real guests in which he interacts with them as George Lucas. The show was performed monthly for six years in New York City, with different guests each time, and although it didn't make much money, audiences seemed to love it. They may or may not have even seen the *Star Wars* films, but that didn't seem to matter. Everyone knows something about George Lucas, and the jokes seemed to land for that reason.

Ratliff has had a modest career as a comedian, but has never hit it big. He is philosophical about this, saying that he doesn't want to be famous, and that if ten people enjoy a performance, that should be enough. Success need not be measured by how many people you can reach. His

personal story, however, indicates that he may not always have felt this way. He auditioned for *Band of Brothers* (2001) over two decades ago, and almost made it, until he was told that Tom Hanks thought he had “dead eyes” so they couldn’t use him. This experience caused him to give up acting for a time, but he has turned his confrontation with that failure into a strength and an opportunity to laugh at himself. His comedic characters are often failures of some sort, and although Lucas can’t exactly be considered a failure, the fact that he has received scathing critique from fans for much of his work makes him a perfect role for Ratliff. He portrays Lucas sympathetically, with nothing mean in his characterization, and yet his George Lucas seems blissfully unaware of the fact that people hate a lot of what he has done with *Star Wars*. As a fan himself, Ratliff can admire and even honor the “failures” of Lucas that continue to make money and have made him a household name. Appropriately, Ratliff has also achieved relative success through his own version of George Lucas, as it spawned an online version during the pandemic that achieved popularity.

The documentary also introduces us to Connor’s parents, Bill and Greta, in Jefferson City, Missouri, and they are both pretty funny on camera as well. His father was a local weatherman who also hosted a kids’ show called “Showtime,” with puppets—which had no budget, and made no money—and in which Connor appeared, as a child. Like his son, Bill didn’t seem to care that his show wasn’t seen by a lot of people: he just wanted to do it for the love of it. Connor Ratliff is achieving relative success, however, playing a financially successful filmmaker whom many people have regarded as an artistic failure—even though Connor says he doesn’t want to be successful. *Star Wars* fans will enjoy this documentary, and anyone who has struggled with failure will appreciate how Ratliff dealt with his own disappointments and leveraged them into doing something he loves in front of an audience.