

in a separate interview. "Ray's combination of physical agility and menace, that was it."

The rehearsal for the audition as Darth Maul went on for an entire week. "I was training with another stunt guy," recalls Park. "The scene was the fight in the desert with Qui-Gon, which was quite different at the time." By the end of the week, Park would be transformed into Darth Maul—complete with horns, red makeup, and black robe—and the scene was shot for George Lucas to see. "I couldn't believe my luck when I got a call from Rick McCallum, who told me that I've got the part. That moment changed my life."

Park has a lot of great memories of the shoot for *The Phantom Menace*, even though it required a lot of work. "We were rehearsing thirteen hours every day," he says. "At one point I had saber fights coming out of my ears."

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Ray Park is famous for his fighting style and grace, especially with Darth Maul's double-edged lightsaber. In rehearsals he had seen pictures of the special weapon, and Park developed his own ideas of what he wanted to do with it. "Originally it was much smaller, the size of a normal saber. But there was no way I could do what I wanted to do with that model. The handle needed to be as big as my waist, so I can wrap it around and rest it on my body without cutting myself." His input flowed into developing the double-edged saber as we know it today. "We came up with a totally new lightsaber technology of fighting."

Park knew from the beginning that Darth Maul wasn't much of a speaking part, and the few lines the character actually had to say were dubbed in the end with the voice of another actor. "At 22 my voice was still quite squeaky," says Park. "And, it wouldn't have worked if the Sith Apprentice had a cockney accent." He loved the voice that was chosen for his character, "but still, when *The Phantom Menace* came out, I was like: I could have done that," laughs Park.

BEYOND THE DARK SIDE

Star Wars skyrocketed the young actor's career. Immediately after shooting Episode I, Park went on to the set of Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow*, where he worked as the fighting Headless Horseman. Again, he was to be seen but not heard. This time his face wasn't only obscured—it was completely absent.

[RIGHT] Park's training paid off in an unforgettable lightsaber duel that remains one of the saga's most exciting action scenes. Park even contributed input on the design of Darth Maul's infamous double-bladed weapon.

