

Q&A Transcript for

**RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**  
**ArcLight Screening**

26 May 2010 - Pasadena, California

An Evening of Conversation  
with

**Mr. Howard Kazanjian**

RAIDERS Executive Producer and  
Vice President of Lucasfilm, LTD

The following transcript is a near-complete rendering of the Q&A session held immediately following the sold-out Paramount Pictures/ArcLight screening of RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (26 May 2010).

The Q&A session was arranged by Lance Mazmanian (who also hosted) and was recorded to video and audio by "The Mission Control".

Note that items in parentheses are provided for clarity and to record audience reaction and/or physical movements. Also, the introduction was rebuilt from memory, due to its being deleted from the published video.

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**LANCE MAZMANIAN:** Welcome everybody. Glad you could all make it. Thanks to the ArcLight and to Paramount Pictures for having this. I'd like to say a couple of things before asking Howard a couple of questions. What many of you in this theatre may not know is that Howard was, for a long time, the power behind the throne at Lucasfilm. As vice-president of Lucasfilm for eight and a half years, he was directly responsible for many of the things Lucasfilm did between 1977 and 1985, and even before. But Howard is a very modest man, and he won't talk about his contributions much. Hopefully that will change soon. For example, if it weren't for this man (grabs Howard's shoulder) the Indiana Jones character we've known and loved would not exist at all. Can you tell us about that, Howard? How he was originally so different from what he actually became?

**LANCE MAZMANIAN (Continued):** Because apparently he was more adult in tone: He drank and smoked and this sorta thing. I believe you had some problems with that?

**HOWARD KAZANJIAN:** Exactly. Originally Indy was a drinker, and he was a smoker. And...I didn't like those traits. It was fairly easy to get the smoke taken away, but it was a little bit more of a challenge to take the drink away. But I finally convinced Lucas *and* Spielberg that Indy shouldn't be that type of guy. (applause)

**LM:** Unquestionably, he'd have been completely different if he'd been those things, so I think that's fantastic. Now, I'm gonna ask a question about...well, a lot of people have heard all kinds of different stories about the Swordsman. What *really* happened?

**HK:** The big Arab swordsman (Terry Richards) I think you're referring to. First let me say, Pat Roach, the actor that played the Giant Sherpa in the Raven Bar, was *also* the guy who fought Indy under the Flying Wing. (gasps from audience). And he appears subsequently in the next two "Indiana Jones" films! (laughter). As *different* characters. Steven liked him and cast him in all those films. The Arab swordsman: Steven was not feeling well the day we were shooting the battle between Indy and the big Arab swordsman. And when we broke for lunch, I sat next to him and he said, "Let's go home. It's noontime; let's call it a day." I said, "Steven, if we call it a day, we have to come back here tomorrow, Saturday, rest the crew on *Sunday*, move to Tunisia on Monday, and shoot on *Tuesday*. If we finish today, we move on Saturday, rest on Sunday and shoot on *Monday*." We would have lost a day. Spielberg says, "Well, I wanna call it quits for the day." Just then, Harrison came over. Now, I'm sitting at an 8-foot long lunch table. Steven and I are the only ones there. I'm facing Steven. And Harrison comes around, no chair on the end, because we're at the end of the table, and he bends down, puts his knees on the ground and he says, "You know, I've been thinking: I'm doing all this fighting, wrestling everybody, using my whip. Why don't I just pull out my gun and shoot this guy?" (laughter) My eyes opened and Steven chuckled a little bit. And then suddenly Steven felt better. And he said, "Let's go back and start shooting." Well, we went back, and we were shooting that scene, and so Steven first shot it as Harrison asked: He pulled-out his gun, and killed the big Arab. And then he was feeling better and we went ahead and shot the original scene, as it was designed. There is a documentary that Lucas did that shows a little bit of that scene. There was a butcher's meat stand in the square.

**HK (Continued):** And behind the meat stand was a butcher. And hanging on...you can see it in the film if you watch carefully...and hanging on this little stand was a pig's head, and some animals and whatnot. And Indy got backed-up on the stand...against the table-top. And the big Arab brought his scimitar down, and as he did, Indy moved to the left and to the right, and it hit this table-top. Now, the second time this big blade came down, the butcher moves a piece of meat in the way, so the big Arab can slice it! (laughter) And that's what the scene was! That's the way the scene was designed. But that scene went out. And actually when the film was first released, and I think even tonight...that's the biggest laugh.

**LM:** They just don't make films like this anymore, right? (applause) A situation I intend to remedy (to Howard) as you well know. These films today, most of them...you walk out of the theatre, they're gone. Out of your head. Not this film. This film has many, many icons, as have a lot of the films you were involved in. What's happened to mainstream films today? Why are they so different from previous eras? Really, in your opinion, what's the difference?

**HK:** Well, the story was great, written by Larry Kasdan. Of course, George Lucas gave a great deal of insight into the way it was supposed to go. Steven is a brilliant, brilliant director. George is a brilliant filmmaker and a *fabulous* editor. And I had a little bit to do with it. (laughter) And we can get into that later. We told Steven from the very beginning, "This is a 'B' film! It's not going to be an 'A' film; nobody's gonna get any awards out of this one." We did: We won four Oscars and had a bunch of nominations...(applause)

**LM:** And thirty years later, you fill-up a house in LA.

**HK:** ...but it was designed on the old serials. About a year before we ever had a script, I had, as did George have, offices at Universal Studios. And I would bring in old serials for us to look at, in the evening. And sometimes John Milius would show up, and Steven (Spielberg) showed up once, I think, and some of our friends would show up, and we'd say, "Oh, look at that cliffhanger!" And the whole movie (RAIDERS) was designed by cliffhangers. The old serials, every thirteen minutes—depending on the serial, or fifteen minutes—there was a cliffhanger: The guy went over the cliff, the ball rolled down, the airplane blew-up, and the hero survived. And that's how we designed the picture. So it (RAIDERS) was nothing new. And if you walk through the film, I could tell you where we picked-up ideas from other films:

**HK (Continued):** Marion shooting the guy in the back was really HIGH NOON; the Staff of Ra and the light showing where the temple is? Lemme tell you about that one. (to Mazmanian) Should I go on, LM? (laughter)

**LM:** It's *your* movie!

**HK:** When the script first came out, my wife and I went to Egypt to scout locations, because that's where most of the—

**LM:** His wife is here tonight, by the way. Carol? There she is. Carol? (Carol Kazanjian waves, applause) There would *be* no Howard without Carol.

**HK:** Now, many of you have seen pictures of Egypt. At "Abu Simbel" where the four giant statues of Ramses are...that temple was raised in 1964, because the Aswan Dam was being built, and the Nile was being flooded. The Germans, the Italians, and the Americans raised it sixty or eighty feet above the existing floor. But the way that one temple was designed was not a typical Egyptian temple where they bring stones and they built a temple, or a house, or a building. They carved it into the side of a mountain. And when you're there, you walk in and you go straight back and there are rooms on the side. And way at the very end of this hall are four life-sized statues of Ramses. But the arms are missing and part of the legs are missing, because they were made of gold and jewels. And this was a holy temple for the Egyptians. And two days out of the year—I think it was in October 22<sup>nd</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup>—the rays of the sun would come down over the Nile, and at a certain moment, the sun would penetrate back through the temple, and hit the four statues of Ramses. We take that idea. (murmuring from audience) Also, as a young kid I saw a movie where an archeologist was in the mountains, and at certain time on a certain day...he was high in the mountains, and he was looking through these peaks, and the sun shined down on a temple. And he marked that on his map. And he went down to that temple...and I think it was a Peruvian temple or an Incan temple. And on that wall where the sun was shining he broke through the wall, and he reached in, looking for his treasure. Now, the camera's inside the temple, and we see a snake, as he reaching around through the temple. So...snake, ark, light: We just *borrowed* items like that. (laughter)

**LM:** Well, you're not the first. Alright, should we open it up to some questions? We don't have much time left.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER # 1:** Where's the Ark? (laughter)

LM: Santa Monica.

HK: Lucasfilm has the Ark. We had two of them. The type of gold that goes on, it peels-off very quickly, so one was damaged and broken, but restored later on. He (George Lucas) has that, and there's going to be an "Indiana Jones Adventure Tour," I think next year (2011). So, they're starting to put that together now. It will tour the nation, like some of the STAR WARS films did...or *props* did. (points to person with question) Yeah, way in the back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2: How did the first draft come in? And how long did it take to get to a good draft? A shootable draft? As a script?

HK: Larry (Kasdan) wrote it fairly fast, because for five full days, George sat with Larry Kasdan and Steven Spielberg—I was there for one of the days—and kind-of guided him through what would be somewhat like an outline. And I think Larry turned it around in about four months, if I remember correctly. And it was very, very good. We only went back and made some minor adjustments. There are a few little scenes that never made the film. And there's one little scene that was added. And that was Marion kissing (Sallah) on the dock. But Larry did a fabulous job, and there wasn't much change made to the first draft. I think we went through three drafts. (points to an audience member) Yep!

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3: Was there much ad-libbing on the set? From Harrison or (Karen) Allen?

HK: No, there was not. Steven added a few things when we started to shoot, Steven added the (Toht) hanger gag. It wasn't an ad-lib, but was added. And there were little things like that that Steven put in.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3: Like when Harrison said, "I don't know, I'm makin' this up as I go".

HK: That was in the script. I should go back and read the script. (laughter) I'm pretty sure that was in the script. (laughter)

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: Hi, Howard, thank you first of all. You made two of my favorite movies of all time RAIDERS and RETURN OF THE JEDI. So, thank you.

HK: Well, thank *you!* (to audience) Did you hear that, everybody? (laughter and loud applause)

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: But seriously, that's why I came to Hollywood. My question for you, I have two of them. The first one is, in *The Well of the Souls*, there's a sketching of C-3P0 and R2-D2. Is there anything else that Lucas hid in the movie that we should look out for, on the stone walls?

HK: In *The Well of the Souls*, you're right, but also the canopy that covered the Ark...has C-3P0 on one of the posts. Also, the airplane that Harrison takes off in? (South America) Did you see the numbers on the side?

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: No.

HK: Well, you guys *all* go out and you buy the movies... (laughter)

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: C-3P0!

HK: That's right. It's basically C-3...but the "three" isn't quite a "3"...P-0. Right. And there's an interesting story on that. Production-wise, that plane came from Minnesota. We got it to California, took it apart, put it on a barge, got it to Hawaii...Kauai...put it back together again—FAA-approved—and flew it out to our location. (points to the back of the theatre) Yes, Carol!

CAROL KAZANJIAN: I have two questions. First of all, I wanted to know the significance of the name "Indiana". And the second question is, how did you handle *all* those snakes?

HK: Well, "Indiana"...I think a lot of people know that "Indiana" was George's dog. A *beautiful* dog. And that's where he got the name, "Indiana". "Jones" was not the last name of the dog. (laughter) And how did we handle the snakes? Well, we knew that we needed snakes. Now, we had mechanical snakes on the floor, controlled from underneath the stage floor. That stage was actually elevated about five, six feet. We had 1500 mechanical snakes, and 200 regular snakes...I forgot what they were...brought in from the Netherlands. And then after we made the first shot, Steven turned to me and he said, "There's not enough snakes!" and I said, "Coming in!" Because I'd *realized* there were not enough, and we had *already* ordered more snakes! Also, there were boas and pythons. Those were the bigger snakes. And of course the cobras. The cobras we shot just for one day, and they were in a big dishbowl, with thick glass.

**HK (Continued):** And they were lazy! It was very difficult for the snake wranglers to get them to rear-up like that (makes cobra motion with hand). Now remember, today, through CGI, you don't need a real snake. But back then, most of what you see was real. There weren't really that many "effects" in the picture.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #4:** It's better that way! (applause)

**LM:** I agree. (to person with raised hand) Go ahead.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #5:** Two-part question: One, what was the reasoning behind your really not wanting to see Indiana Jones as a drinker? Because a lot of characters today, in leading roles, they're either drunk or have some kind of addiction.

**LM:** Or problems with their dad. (laughter)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #5:** And the other part was, working with Alfred Molina. That was one of the first roles I've ever seen him in.

**HK:** Why did I say "not a drinker"? Because he was a better man and he could stand on his own, without the drink. Also, there was a movie—"Secret of the Incas"—with Charlton Heston. And Charlton's character was very much like an Indiana Jones in costume, and everything else, *and* he was a drinker. And I didn't want to "refer" to that part. For somebody to say "We saw the movie and Charlton Heston did the same thing." On Alfred Molina, this was his first movie role. He'd never really acted before, and he wasn't an actor! And the very first thing we shot in London, and the first time we used him, was going into the temple...where the big ball eventually rolled-down. And the very first shot was when he walked in...and the, uh...(to Mazmanian) What were those damned things?

**LM/AUDIENCE:** Tarantulas!

**HK:** Tarantulas! (chuckles) The tarantulas were on his back. And he had said to Steven just before we made that shot, "Y'know, I don't know if I can do this. I've really never acted; I'm not a good actor". So, we get that first take, and Steven says, "Cut!" And then he says (to Molina) "You were great! You're a good actor!" And Molina says, "I was *scared!*" (laughter) And if you look at that scene again, you can see that he was really scared.

LM: Yeah, he swoons, if you watch close.

HK: He's a big actor today.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #6:** How many days did you shoot? You said you started in London. Where did you go from there?

HK: We started in London. We prepared in the United States. And then we shot in La Rochelle, France. That's where the submarine was. And that submarine was designed and built for DAS BOOT. (audience murmurings) It never got off the ground. That production fell apart, we got the sub, we added some things to it—the numbers, of course, and the gun on the deck—and shot with it. Then DAS BOOT got going again, and used it. And it sank while they were using it. (laughter)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #7:** Sorry, I'm lost. Did you produce (INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE) CRYSTAL SKULL at all?

HK: (emphatically) *No.* (laughter and enthusiastic applause)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #7:** What the hell happened to that movie?! It was terrible!

HK: No comment. (pause) Y'know, I'm writing a book, and maybe, *maybe* I'll give my opinion on that one. (laughter)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #8:** One thing that strikes me watching this again is the incredible stunt work. As the head of production, when you read a script like that, and you realize you're gonna have you do all these stunts, do you, like, reel it back in, or do you just say, "Hey, this is how we're gonna do this." And where did you find such great stunt people.

HK: We had American stunt people, but mostly British. Our budget was US\$20-million. And money was put up by Paramount, yet George Lucas owns the film. He owns the negative, he controls it. It's very unusual in Hollywood for a studio to pay for something that somebody else owns.

LM: Like Kubrick.

**HK:** And we only had \$20-million. And so I budgeted the film for \$20-million. Let me tell you a quick story: The Flying Wing was designed as a four-engine plane. (audience murmurings) And we built a small model of a the Flying Wing before we actually built the real one. Vickers, who built the Rolls-Royce cars at the time, eventually built the real Flying Wing. We were preparing in Los Angeles at the Egg Company, across the street from Universal Studios. George had flown down, and as I met him at the back door I said "George, I have a problem here: This plane is going to cost a million dollars! And it's not in the budget." He didn't say a word. We walk in. We walk into the conference room. Other crew were there, designs and conceptual designs and everything on the table. The first thing George does is he picks-up the Flying Wing model, and he holds it with his fingers, at the very tips of each wing. And he says, "Oh! What's this?!" And someone says, "Well, this is the model of the Flying Wing." And George goes...snap! (makes breaking motion with his hands and arms) And he breaks-off the outer two engine/motors! And he turns to me and he says, "What'll you think that'll cost now?" (huge laughter) And I say, "About 750." (more laughter) Steven never knew that story. He didn't know that I'd talked to George. Nobody...I don't think I've ever told this story before. But it was tough to get a \$20-million budget. But really what happened was the (English) pound was fluctuating. I did a \$20-million budget, based on the pound, sent it over to Paramount for approval, they said, "It's \$150,000 more than it's supposed to be!" Well, we went back and forth and then I found out that I'd do it at one amount, based on the pound *that* day, and by the time Paramount read it, it was a different amount! So, we finally locked it in at one number. Which I think was \$1.34 to the pound.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #9:** I have a question on the front end and on the back end. The front end is, was there ever a moment when you were worried about it not coming together? Was there any point in pre-production or even development when you felt like, "Is this ever going to happen?" On the other end, I'd like to know, at what point did you realize that, this isn't a B-Movie, this is going to be a classic?

**HK:** No. There was no problem putting the movie together. It was a challenging movie, but there was no problem. The one thing we weren't too sure about was, is Steven going to really direct it? And we didn't get a commitment from him until almost the last minute. When I say the "last minute," I don't recall now, but it was two or three months prior to us actually shooting that Steven finally said, "Okay, I'm doing that!"

**HK (Continued):** We also had problems with Universal at the time, who claimed that Steven owed them his next picture. And that's when Steven made a deal with Universal: "Okay, I'll do another picture for you!" It was E.T.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #9:** What changed his mind? Was there a conversation, or was there something that actually changed his mind and allowed that? I guess...as a movie-maker, there are miracles in every movie, and what was that miracle that got your movie made?

**HK:** Me. (huge laughter and applause). No, I can't answer that. It was just pulling it together; it's pre-production, with the right people. We had a brilliant cameraman, Doug Slocomb, we had a great production designer, Norman Reynolds. You know, an interesting thing for any of you film-buffs out there: Doug Slocombe—who was the cameraman and who did the next two Indiana Jones films—never used a light meter. And I asked him one day: Why? And he said, "Because it never says what I want it to say."  
(laughter/applause)

**LM:** Alright, I have a question. You don't have to answer, and I know you're gonna write about this at some point, and I know a lot of people here know about this situation. Now tell us the *real* story about Tom Selleck.

**HK:** Well, George originally wanted Tom Selleck for the picture. And...

**LM:** Note: George.

**HK:** George Lucas wanted Tom Selleck for the movie. (long pause) How can I say this fast? (laughter)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #10:** Bad idea?! (laughter)

**HK:** George was suing Universal for "Battlestar: Galactica," because many of the characters ripped him off. Glen Larson was the (Battlestar) producer who not only has ripped George Lucas off, but a lot of other creative people. That's documented.

**LM:** Oh, man. You've opened a can of worms now.

**HK:** Yeah, I'm going to have trouble going home tonight. (laughter)

**HK (Continued):** So, George and Fox are now...we *know* the film is a Paramount picture, so George *personally* is suing Universal and Glen Larson. Glen Larson is the producer on the Tom Selleck television show.

**LM:** You're talking about "Magnum: PI".

**HK:** "Magnum: PI". So, we knew that a strike, an actor's strike, was going to happen. It was inevitable, just like the writer's strike we had a year ago. And we said, to Universal, give us Tom Selleck for this picture, because we're making it in England, not under SAG, but under Equity, so we can keep working during the strike. And then by the time the strike is over, you'll get him back, and he'll have a great picture under his belly. They wouldn't do it. But...to answer your question back up there: It (RAIDERS) was one of two pictures that I knew would be a hit. And usually you don't tell your friends you're... (pause) You know, you walk out of dailies and everybody says, like, "Academy Award, Academy Award! This is the greatest picture ever!" You can't say that! Because you never know. Sometimes it doesn't go together, or timing is wrong, or the distributor, or something. But I knew that RAIDERS would be a hit picture. Never as big as it was. But I knew it'd be a hit.

**LM:** (points at front rows) Here in the red?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER # 10:** What personally are you most proud of about this picture?

**HK:** The whole thing. (laughter) Y'know, the bits and pieces I put into it. I mean, not only working as Executive Producer and being there, but my ideas that came across on the screen that, y'know, nobody knows about. When a producer, or writer, or director, or an actor...they all bring suggestions. You never know who. Well, let me tell you: On a successful film, the director gets the credit; on a film that is not successful, the producer gets the credit! (laughter)

**AUDIENCE MEMBER # 11:** Everything plays with a lot of humor in it. I just wonder if you intended that from the very beginning or if that sort of came through the process of making it?

**HK:** We knew we needed some humor. You have to have some humor in films. You know, the story is that if you can laugh and if you can cry, and if you have a good story, you usually have a successful film.

**HK (Continued):** But it was also Steven's talent, and how he used his camera. He uses his camera very cleverly in this. And how he directs his actors. And how it's cut together. And his editor, Michael Kahn—who won an Oscar for this picture, and other Oscars, and always works with Steven—grew up in comedy, and knew how to pace it. So part of it is pacing, even if it may not be designed in the script that way.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #12:** I've heard a lot of rumors about James Bond being an influence. I was wondering if you had any stories about that. Were the Bond movies an influence at all?

**HK:** James Bond? No. (laughter) No, not at all.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER #13:** How'd you get a "PG" rating? If that film was out today, there's no way you'd get a PG rating for that, with heads blowing-up and all that stuff.

**HK:** There was no "PG-13" at the time. And two films caused PG-13 to come about: The second Indiana Jones and...something else, I can't remember. But I'll tell you a secret: When we showed it to the MPAA, who does the ratings, one of the guys had his wife in that small theatre, and she thought it was a comedy. And when the first...I forgot the character's name...the guy with all the darts in his back falls down. She screamed! And there were several other places that she didn't like. Now, she has nothing to do with the rating, but her husband was there. So they came back and said, "The summer so far is terrible. The box-office is way down. What can you do to change this film to keep it a PG as opposed to 'R'?" Remember, no PG-13. And I said, "Well, we can't touch the first thing you suggested." And the other thing they didn't like was the head blowing-up. Well, ILM had already shot different versions with more fire. So I went back and we put the fire in. They also didn't like, in the bar, in Karen Allen's bar, the guy being shot in the head. And we cut away a little faster. So we made very few changes, and got the PG rating. I don't think it'd be a PG-13 today. I don't think so. I hope not. (laughter)

**LM:** Anyone else? (silence)

**HK:** Well, thank you! You've been great! Thank you very much! (huge, lasting applause)

END