



“Okay, we’re going to try the fight now while we’re in position,” Lucas decides rather suddenly. “I’m curious to see how this will work.” Gillard walks over. “We’re going to rehearse it once,” Lucas tells him, “then shoot it once and see how it looks. Okay, this is it, Nick.”

Gillard organizes the actors and Michael Byrne (Palpatine’s fencing double) while Lucas observes from the video village. Stuntman Ben Cooke (Kit Fisto) is still having problems holding his lightsaber with his gloves. “This Kit Fisto holds it by the blade. You can tell he’s not a real Jedi,” Lucas jokes, watching the monitor.

“He’s tough—he doesn’t feel the pain,” Knoll says.

Take. The spontaneous shot of the fight isn’t working. “You can’t win if you don’t take risks,” Lucas shrugs. “Well, that was interesting. I think we’ve exhausted that idea.”

LOCATION WRAP: 20:00 SETUPS: 58
SCRIPT SHOT TODAY: 2m 52s

SHOOT DAY 13: WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2003

LOCATION: Stage 7
SET: Int. Palpatine’s office
SCENES SHOT: 99pt
VFX [visual effects] NOTES: Sc. 99—Anakin’s lightsaber goes flying, chair is zapped out of the way, lightsaber flies into Anakin’s hand, lightsaber flies into Palpatine’s hand.



Gillard is talking logistics with Lucas and Coleman. Today is going to be one of the more difficult days of the shoot, as the Mace-Palpatine fight is one of the trickiest in terms of preparation and choreography. Fletcher asks whether the three Jedi Masters, whom Palpatine has struck down, can leave the stage. “We can lose everybody; they’re all dead,” Lucas responds. “We’ll turn around and do Mace now.”

Lucas and Gillard talk things over again. “I have to get the movie done,” the director is saying. “Regardless, I have to have something on the screen that works.”

“One of the first assignments for me when I got here was to spend two weeks with Nick Gillard,” Coleman explains. “So Nick and I are collaborating quite a bit right now, as I try and figure out what fight elements we can achieve with animation. As fights are taken from the rehearsal room, with no set pieces, to the actual sets, sometimes the fights have to change a little bit because George will either have time constraints or set constraints, or need to change an element. And then Nick has to react right away, so I’m there as he turns around and asks, ‘Can you animate that backflip? Because it would take us X amount of time—which we don’t have—to do it.’”

The bell rings. “Quiet, please,” third assistant director Samantha Smith says. Take. Makeup artists pat down Jackson’s head for glare. He and McDiarmid are in close quarters with

Top left: Lucas stands between Palpatine (McDiarmid) and Windu (Jackson). Top right: The fight continues. Above left: McCallum and Coleman. Right: Mayhew (Chewbacca) arrives for Lucas’s final costume approval, flanked by Rebecca Hunt, Kristelle Gardiner, Hamish Roxburgh, and Lou and Dave Elsey.



their lightsabers; the Steadicam is practically on top of them, so Harding is wearing a helmet. Ian performs some lightsaber moves only just learned. Lucas asks him to keep his hands together on the saber handle.

Several takes later, Jackson and McDiarmid clash and freeze, staring into each other's eyes.

"Okay, cut!" Lucas calls out. The two almost collapse in laughter. "We're going to be here all day," the director says.

After the crew breaks for lunch and leaves the set, silhouetted against a greenscreen by the remaining lights, Lucas, McCallum, Knoll, and Coleman discuss the fight.

"I need a close-up of Ian," Lucas is saying. "We're not going to be able to do a shot like this off a digital character. We can try—and if we do it, I will applaud you tremendously. But nobody told me I couldn't shoot close-ups."

"What I think the misunderstanding is, 'cause I wasn't there—" McCallum starts.

"Nobody said anything to me till this morning," Lucas injects.



"I think there was a misunderstanding—"

Gillard arrives and suggests alterations to the fight. "There's always time," he says.

"You saw what I did. I want to see Ian's expression," Lucas says to him.

"I misunderstood. I thought it was going to be face replacement," Gillard explains.

"But I have to have some close-ups. I can't shoot the whole thing in a wide shot."

"There are places in there where they're not fighting—you could move in there," Gillard suggests, but Lucas reiterates that he doesn't want to switch too often from wide shots to close-ups, and he has doubts about digital face replacement.

"I think we can push the face replacement closer than we did last time," Knoll says.

"If the reference is really good," Coleman agrees.

"Well, that's lunch anyway," Lucas concludes.

Later that day, Mayhew, in full costume, climbs into a station wagon—seated in the copilot's seat, of course—on his way to Stage 7 for Lucas's final approval. With staff from the creatures department in tow, he arrives on the set of Palpatine's office. George walks over and says, "Looks good. Excellent. How do you feel?"

"Great," Mayhew says from within his Wookiee mask.

"Back home," Lucas says, and then beckons to Samuel Jackson, who strolls over and says, "Oh, you're dressed today—and combed." The two actors then talk "Wookiee" together, making appropriately seal-like barking sounds and laughing.