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Icarus on Film

Written by

Felix Hockey  
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Felixjhockey@outlook.com

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MONTAGE

Talking head JENNIFER SIMONE speaks. She is credited as a FILM CRITIC.

JENNIFER SIMONE

Well, Solar Knights was an overnight sensation . It was created by two kids straight out of film school. Mike Evans and Steven Simons. They wrote it during their final year and directed together.

Archive footage and photos of MIKE (checkered shirt, beard, sunglasses, early 20s) and STEVEN (early 20s) on set.

Talking head Rick Maclachlan (40s) speaks. The subtitles state: RICK MACLACHLAN - PRODUCER SOLAR KNIGHTS 1-3

RICK MACLACHLAN

They were the kings of Hollywood you know? They couldn't put a foot wrong.

MARTIN SCORCESE

They were geniuses!

JENNIFER SIMONE

Nothing in science fiction had been able to become that successful before. I don't think it would be hyperbole to say they are responsible for moving the genre from B pictures to the money making machine it is today.

RICK MACLACHLAN

I've gotta say, it took us completely by surprise. Then I said to the boys, fellas, you gotta make another. This cow's got more milk.

JENNIFER SIMONE

They made two sequels, each more critically and commercially adored than the last. After the third film Solar Knights: Get Off My Dawn, Evans and Simons announced that that would be where the series ended. The story was finished and there was nothing left to say...

RICK MACLACHLAN

And like that, the dream was over. I bought my third house, thinking we were going to keep rolling films out but they said they'd had enough. I ended up in massive amounts of debt. I had to sell-

JENNIFER SIMONE

And for all anybody knew, that was the end for Solar Knights...

TITLE: 15 YEARS LATER

A youtube fan, surrounded by Solar Knights merchandise

YOUTUBE FAN

Solar Knights is back baby!

RICK MACLACHLAN (V.O.)

One day, I get a call from Mike saying "Rick, it's time. I wanna do another Solar Knights". That was honestly a happier time than my wedding.

MIKE EVANS

I thought it was time for another Solar Knights trilogy and to explore that world once again...

INT. OFFICES - DAY

TITLE: EPISODE 1: PRE-PRODUCTION

Rick sits in an office walled with film posters, including Breathless.

RICK MACLACHLAN

So we're just waiting for Mike to turn up.

A pause as Rick swings in his chair.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)

I see you're admiring my posters.... Ah Breathless. In my opinion that's the best Hollywood movie.

Mike Evans enters.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
Ayyy. There's the big man! The man  
behind it all!

MIKE EVANS  
Well, thanks.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
The numero umero, the lord of the  
rings.

Mike takes a seat.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
You know as in Solar Rings.

MIKE EVANS  
Oh. Well shall we begin?

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Sure!

MIKE EVANS  
I've got a rough draft of the script  
here.

RICK MACLACHLAN (TO CAMERA)  
Oooh this is the exciting part,  
reading the script for the first  
time. What's the title?

MIKE EVANS  
Solar Knights: Son of the Sun

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Son of The Sun, I like that.

Mike hands Rick a stained script.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
What's this?

MIKE EVANS  
Oh I may have spilled a little dip on  
it when writing it.

Rick holds it up as it drips sauce onto his desk.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Oh well, I'm sure it's still the  
sauce of genius.

MIKE EVANS

Hopefully.

RICK MACLACHLAN

I'll let it dry out before I read it.

Rick leaves the script to one side.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)

Well I've got good news! We've got our actress. Kiera's signed on to be in all three films.

MIKE EVANS

That's great.

RICK MACLACHLAN

She didn't even need to read the script. That's what your name does, Mike.

MIKE EVANS

Well, it's the films that talk for me.

RICK MACLACHLAN

They sure do! We're meeting Tony later who we want as our main actor.

MIKE EVANS

Right.

RICK MACLACHLAN

But we might have a problem with Vasker. He doesn't use string instruments anymore.

CUT TO: Mike and Rick using the speakerphone.

VASKER (VOICE)

(Russian accent)

Hello?

MIKE EVANS

Vasker? Hi it's Mike.

VASKER

Oh Mike! So gut to hear your voice after all these years. I'm so happy to be working on Solar Knights again.

MIKE EVANS

That's great, Vasker. Vasker, I was wondering if you could compose the original theme again with those lovely string instruments?

VASKER

String instruments! String instruments!? I spit on string instruments. No I do a new theme for you with theremin. It's the future.

MIKE EVANS

Vasker, we really love the work you've done with the original theme. Would you be able to make it sound like that. The strings really made it come together.

VASKER

I win two grammys with theremin. None with strings. I give you theremin theme, we win grammy.

MIKE EVANS

No Vasker, we really want the strings.

VASKER

Listen I play for you now.

Theremin music begins to play over the speakerphone. Mike hangs up.

MIKE EVANS

He'll come around.

INT. CASTING STUDIO

Mike and Rick sit behind a desk as TONY BLACKHORSE enters.

MIKE EVANS

Tony, hi.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Hi, how are you.

MIKE EVANS

Great, great.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
I just wanted to say, Tony, I saw you  
in Macbeth a few months ago and, god,  
you killed me.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
Macbeth?

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Yeah.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
I haven't actually done Macbeth. I  
was in Hamlet a wh-

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Hamlet! That's the one! Anyway, I  
thought you were terrific.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
Well, thank you.

MIKE EVANS  
Okay, Tony.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
Yeah.

MIKE EVANS  
So we were thinking of you to play  
Soka Ryu, the son of Kaji who was  
obviously the hero of the first  
trilogy.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
Yeah, I loved him.

MIKE EVANS  
In all honesty, you're almost set for  
the part. We just want to see you go  
through a few lines.

TONY BLACKHORSE  
Yeah, sure!

Mike hands Tony a script.

MIKE EVANS  
If you just wanna read through the  
script and then we'll get started.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Okay.

Tony begins to read.

TONY BLACKHORSE (cont'd)

Do you mind if I change the lines at all, just to make them feel a little more natural when I'm in character.

MIKE EVANS

I'm sort of against that kind of thing, really.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Okay.

MIKE EVANS

Each word has been stylistically designed in order to get the right meaning, you know?

TONY BLACKHORSE

Yeah, sure.

MIKE EVANS

Think of it as an instruction manual for how to play the character. Like Ikea furniture.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Okay.

MIKE EVANS

If we don't follow the instructions we'll end up with... A chair with one leg or something

They all laugh.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Yeah of course, I get ya'. Well I'm ready to start.

MIKE EVANS

Okay, shall we go from 'Hello there'.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Okay.

(MORE)



TONY BLACKHORSE (cont'd)

(a pause)

Hello there Lord Frakon, high Vikar Maledoth gave word that I'd find you and your dirty minions scourging around this hellscape.

MIKE EVANS

Ah, Soka Ryu! I knew your father well. Did he ever tell you about the time in Sycamore City

TONY BLACKHORSE

It rings a bell but I can't quite recall at the moment.

MIKE EVANS

Okay stop. That was perfect Tony.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Really?

MIKE EVANS

We're so happy to have you on board.

RICK MACLACHLAN

That was stunning. My blood went cold.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Well, thank you very much.

MIKE EVANS

Just one more thing, because you're playing Kaji's son in this. We were thinking that we could use some CGI to make you look more like him. It would look amazing in the finished project.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Ookay, but you'll still be able to see it's me though right? I'm kind of hoping to raise my profile with this role.

MIKE EVANS

Oh sure. It would only be small things, nothing major.

TONY BLACKHORSE

I guess if you were going to do it completely CGI you would have cast the original actor.

MIKE EVANS

Either that or he won't return my  
calls anymore.

All laugh as the camera crash zooms on Mike as he looks away  
and his face falls for a second.

INT. FILM SET - DAY

A number of crew set up a green screen, A sound man checks  
his equipment with his assistant, the cinematographer  
practices using the ronin. Other crew hustle and bussle or  
sit around drinking cofee. Rick sits and sips his own.

RICK MACLACHLAN

So it's day one of shooting,  
everybody's super excited. And it  
should be a good shoot.

People turn around and start to cheer.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)

That must be Mike.

He and the camera turn around to see STEVEN SIMONS (mid 30s,  
baseball cap, leather jacket) enter and walk up to Rick.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)

Oh my god, it's Steven Simons.

The two embrace.

STEVEN SIMONS

Hey Rick, how's it going.

RICK MACLACHLAN

This is a pleasant surprise!

STEVEN SIMONS

I'm filming my movie next door so I  
thought I'd pop in say hi during the  
break. Where's Mike?

RICK MACLACHLAN

He's on his way.

STEVEN SIMONS

He's not here yet? It's nearly lunch.  
Half the days gone.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Mike and Steven sit as if both being interviewed.

MIKE EVANS

Well this here is my good friend  
Steven who helped me make the first  
three Solar Knight films.

STEVEN SIMONS

I co-directed them.

MIKE EVANS

But you decided you didn't want to  
make the new one.

STEVEN SIMONS

Nah. I think they were a certain time  
and a certain place for me and I want  
to move on to... Other things now.

MIKE EVANS

Well I hope you aren't too annoyed  
with what I'm going to do to your  
baby.

STEVEN SIMONS

No, you do what you want with it  
mate, seriously.

MIKE EVANS

Well. You might find this  
interesting. You remember our plans  
for the Nakadians?

STEVEN SIMONS

The Nakadains? Of course.

MIKE EVANS

Well they're finally going to be part  
of the Solar Knights franchise.

STEVEN SIMONS

AHAHAHAHA! Wow! Really?

(To camera)

The Nakadains were a joke me and Mike  
came up with when we were trying to  
see how far we could go with Solar  
Knights before people worked out we  
were taking the piss.

MIKE EVANS

No.

STEVEN SIMONS

I mean the whole concept of the series was "what kind of shit can we sell to the lowest common-denominator in order to make our names". Those writing sessions were hilarious but we had to tone it down for the actual script because, you know. There is such thing as going too far

(to Mike)

So you're really doing the Nakadains? I'm impressed Mike.

MIKE EVANS

That's not true. The Nakadains were a great concept that we never had the opportunity to use.

STEVEN SIMONS

They were funny. Wait, you were aware they were a joke weren't you Mike? We weren't being serious with them.

RICK MACLACHLAN (O.S.)

What are you working on now, Steven.

STEVEN SIMONS

Oh I'm making a film about a widower who lost her husband in world war two. Her son's marriage makes her become lost in memories of her own past. It's a beautiful, beautiful story and I felt that I just had to tell it.

MIKE EVANS

It won't make as much money as Solar Knights though will it?

Steven laughs.

STEVEN SIMONS

No, Mike, it won't. I'm sure by christmas I'll be kicking myself for not making Solar Knights 4.

MIKE EVANS

Son of the Sun.

STEVEN SIMONS

Son of the Sun?

MIKE EVANS

Remember the title it's very important.

STEVEN SIMONS

Oh I'm not gonna watch it. So how does it feel to be directing on your own for the first time?

MIKE EVANS

Really good. I feel like I have complete freedom to make the films I want to make now. We're actually filming this scene today with the Kandorians.

Mike shows Steven the script.

STEVEN SIMONS

You mean, Vandorians.

MIKE EVANS

Yeah. Anyway this is the scene we're shooting today.

STEVEN SIMONS

Do you mind if I just change a few things? The dialogue's kind of clunky.

Steven takes out a pen and starts to write on the script.

MIKE EVANS

Actually each word is stylist-

STEVEN SIMONS

Did you go to that writing course I recommended?

Mike glances at the camera.

MIKE EVANS

No, I felt I didn't need it.

STEVEN SIMONS

You should go.

A pause.

MIKE EVANS

I'd really like you to give me back my script now.

STEVEN SIMONS

No don't worry. I just fixed it up a little bit for ya.

(To the room)

Does anybody want to photocopy this out and give it to the actors?

MIKE EVANS

No don't.

RICK MACLACHLAN (O.S.)

Sure thing, Steven.

Rick walks into frame and takes the script off Steven.

A pause as Mike watches the script leave the room.

STEVEN SIMONS

Anyway, good luck with it all.

INT. FILM SET - DAY

Mike walks through the film set as the camera follows him. He approaches SYDNEY WOODNORTH (60s, tall, posh English voice) who is in conversation with Tony. Tony is covered in a morph suit which only reveals his eyes. The face is also covered in bobbles.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Ah, Michael. I've just finished reading the new draft you sent. You know I think it's the best thing you've ever written.

MIKE EVANS

We're actually changing back to the earlier version, Sydney.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Oh, but why? The new version is far better, anybody will tell you that.

MIKE EVANS

It doesn't connect with my vision.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

I think you're making a terrible mistake, Michael. I'll tell you what, I'll use my lines from the new version and you'll see how much better it is.

MIKE EVANS

No we're going with the earlier version.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Michael, I'm doing it this way and you are going to thank me for it later. Now I've got to get into make-up.

Sydney leaves.

TONY BLACKHORSE

Mike, can I talk to you about the digital face thing? I'm a bit worried.

MIKE EVANS

You're fine, Tony. We can still see it's you completely.

INT. MIKE INTERVIEW

MIKE EVANS

You obviously get some dissidents with any film and a director's job is to deal with them.

INT. FILM SET

Sydney sits with his coffee, talking to some make-up girls. As Mike approaches.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Well Checkov's a little bit trickier to do than Pinter because Pinter was always intended to be done in English -. Oh Mike, what can I do for you.

MIKE EVANS

I've got a new scene for you if you'd care to read it.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Of course, of course.

Mike hands him the script and Sydney begins to read.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH (cont'd)

I see. You're killing my character off....

MIKE EVANS

It's better for the story that way.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

I beg god for my life...I ask for forgiveness for defying his will... But Michal, my character isn't religious.

MIKE EVANS

By the end he comes to realise that he must answer to a higher power.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Michael, can I see you in private please?

INT. BATHROOM

The camera sneaks in to watch Mike and Sydney talking by the sinks. Neither notice the intrusion.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Michael this is completely petty and I must say you are acting like a child here.

Pause

MIKE EVANS

I'm just writing what's best for the story.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

We both know what your doing and frankly its pathetic.

Mike looks at the floor.

MIKE EVANS

I know a director can seem like he's got no reason to do what he does but there is a vision

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

Oh fuck off. This isn't about your fucking vision. I've worked with Kubrick and David Lean. They were both fucking arseholes but they had vision. This, this is just unprofessional.



MIKE EVANS

I really don-

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

And I'm not going to take it from the likes of you... Now I'll do the death scene, quite frankly one film is enough for me with this space fighting nonsense, but pleading god for my life? That's not what my character would do.

MIKE EVANS

Well I made the character so-

SYDNEY WOODNORTH

(with compassion)

You're ruining your story, Michael.

A pause.

SYDNEY WOODNORTH (cont'd)

Now I'll do the death scene, but if you do not write my lines properly I will say what I think is right. Are we clear?

Mike says nothing.

Sydney places his hand on Mike's shoulder and then leaves.

Mike looks into the mirror and then head butts it. He stares at himself.

MIKE EVANS

I have no idea what I'm doing. I have no idea what I'm doing. I have no i-

FADE TO BLACK.

Title: Episode 3: Post Production

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Execs and crew including Rick get into their seats. Mike stands up to talk to them all.

MIKE EVANS

Well, welcome to the first screening of our first cut of Solar Knights: Son of the Sun.

Applause and cheers.

MIKE EVANS (cont'd)  
We've all put a lot of time and effort into this and now we get to see where it all got us and uhh, hopefully you'll feel rewarded. Enjoy

Mike sits down and the title sequence begins to play with Vasker's theromin music.

FADE TO:

The screen plays THE END.

Silence. Confused faces. Rick looks horrified.

MIKE EVANS (cont'd)  
It's certainly memorable.

EXEC 1  
Yeah.

MIKE EVANS  
And different to what people will expect.

CREWMEMBER  
I liked the scene with the lava

RICK MACLACHLAN  
WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!

MIKE EVANS  
Well Rick, it's only the first draft.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
No, Mike. WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!

Silence.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
THAT WASN'T A FILM THAT WAS A SHITSHOW! HOW THE FUCK ARE WE GOING TO MAKE MONEY OUT OF THAT?

Silence.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
You can't answer me. You can't fucking answer me. What the fuck do we do.

Silence.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
Who's the main editor here?

Silence.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
WHO'S THE FUCKING EDITOR! RAISE YOUR  
FUCKING HAND!

A young 20 year old raises his hand.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
Okay, you. Can you fix this.

EDITOR  
I can maybe tone down some of the  
scenes.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Okay, do that. Now we're going to  
have to market the shit out of this  
before word of mouth creeps in.

MIKE EVANS  
Perhaps the audie-

RICK MACLACHLAN  
SHUT UP MIKE ADULTS ARE SPEAKING NOW

EXEC 2  
If we cancel the press screenings  
things might look up.

Rick clicks his fingers to the exec.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Finally, somebody with a fucking  
brain.

The exec next to Rick nudges him and nods toward the camera.  
Rick spots it and get up.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
Okay we're going to the board meeting  
upstairs to discuss this.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Rick, the execs and editors walk down the corridor fast.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
How much time do you think it'll take  
to recut this?

EDITOR  
Two days at the least.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
FUCK!

EXEC 1  
Rick, Mike's still following us.

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Okay you guys go ahead.

The others walk into the board room as Rick turns around to  
face Mike.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
Mike, thanks for all the work you've  
done for us and we hope to work with  
you again soon.

He shakes his hand.

MIKE EVANS  
Bu-

RICK MACLACHLAN  
Best of luck.

Rick walks into the boardroom, the camera tries to follow.

RICK MACLACHLAN (cont'd)  
No, not you. This party's over.

He closes the door on the camera and we turn around to see  
Mike, isolated and alone.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE: Solar Knights: Son of the Sun was a commercial  
success, grossing 4 billion at the box office.

Mike Evans was bought out of the Solar Knights company and  
did not direct the two sequels.

He now makes small personal films only shown to his friends  
and family.

END