



Collectively, the films he's been in to-date have grossed over \$5bn worldwide. He's acted alongside everyone from Harrison Ford to Ricky Gervais. He even runs an actors' agency. At three-foot-six, *Willow* star Warwick Davis packs more talent per square inch than most of Hollywood – and he kindly puts aside half an hour to chat to TEN4 about his first lucky break in *Star Wars*, standing up for the little guy and why Parkinson should watch his back.

You've got the ideal career in many ways. You've been in huge films, but you're not hamstrung by press attention.

Thank you. There's this site called The Numbers which ranks actors by their box-office grosses, and I'm something like number forty, above way more famous names, because I've been involved in so many of these profitable sci-fi and fantasy franchises. I've got the best of both worlds because I'm not harassed. I get recognised when I go out, but can lead a normal private life without being stalked by paparazzi.

What do you get recognised most for?

Willow is probably the thing I'm most popular for. It's almost twenty years ago now, but it has that timeless quality. People still ask me about working with Val Kilmer. The special effects have long since been surpassed, but people don't go to see films for special effects; they go for the story and the characters. One of the things I hear most often about *Willow* is that people have worn out their VHS tape of it and had to get a new one.

In many of your roles – a goblin in *Labyrinth*, Marvin in *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, Professor Flitwick in *Harry Potter* – you've been hidden under prosthetics; do you not get fed up with that?

There's rarely a film goes by when I'm not glued under something. But that's brilliant; it means I can play an old man, an alien creature, anything, through the genius of a good make-up artist.

And you run a talent agency, is that right?

I've been running Willow Personal Management for eleven years. We represent actors under five-foot, and more recently actors over seven-foot as well – including the tallest man in Britain. I had an agent representing me who didn't really acknowledge the acting side. Casting agents tend to ring up and go, 'I need some people under four-foot' – 'How many?' – 'How much do they cost?' Some jobs do just need someone under four-foot who can handle a creature suit. But we try to send someone who actually suits the role.

What's been the key factor in your success?

I was thrown in the deep end with *Star Wars*. My Gran heard an advert on the radio to say they were looking for short people, and I went along aged 11 or 12 and got the part of Wicket the Ewok. I didn't really know how to act, but I worked on that. I don't think I would've been cast in so many films purely because of my height. But *Star Wars* was my lucky break.

Have you ever regretted choosing such a competitive career?

In the very early '90s I didn't work for a while, and nearly gave up and went to do something else. But then a script came in and the work hasn't stopped since. It still feels like walking a tightrope, but a thrilling tightrope, not a scary one. Looking back over my CV I've done ok, but it doesn't always feel like that.

I hear you've devised your own spy movie?

Agent One-Half is a story I came up with in America. We've all seen spies in movies like Jason Bourne and James Bond. Our idea is that they're just the face of the job. The real agents are creeping about under the casino table, and instead of code-names like 007, they're Agent One-Half, Agent Three-Quarters, Two-Thirds. They're the ones actually doing the job. It'd be a fun adventure for children; they can relate to being three or four-foot tall and not getting any credit. But it's on the backburner for now, looking for money.

What ambitions do you still have left to fulfil?

I want to host a chat show with a difference. I want to take actors and celebrities out of their comfort zone; not just sitting there in a studio. Keep talking to them the whole time and they'd open up more – it's too easy to put up a front in a studio on a sofa and appear how you want to. I've got the perfect title: Small Talk.

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