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ASPEN LECTURE
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO STAR WARS

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CASS SUNSTEIN

Legal Scholar

Former Administrator, White House Office of Information
and Regulatory Affairs

Robert Walmsley University Professor, Harvard Law School

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO STAR WARS

(4:10 p.m.)

SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, for those of you in the lobby, if you could please keep a seat. For those of you who were in this room before, you are not going to have any technical problems, I promise you, because the speaker is going to be standing right here. I think some of you are aware that we created the special Aspen lectures when we have someone incredibly distinguished that we want to hear from alone as opposed in conversation. And Cass Sunstein is an ideal person for this special series of lectures that we have that we specially package and promote. And for those of you who have friends and won't be able to be here today, I urge them please to come to our website very soon.

I know many of you heard professor Sunstein in conversation with David Brookes last night at the St. Regis and we are thrilled to have him here today for an Aspen lecture. He is, as I think most of you know, one of the country's leading thinkers and writers on law, on behavioral economics and public policies, also a very distinguished public servant. He's written prodigiously and provocatively and with great wisdom about many, many topics and he is here today, to give a lecture "The World According to Star Wars." Cass Sunstein.

MR. SUNSTEIN: Okay, so it's a great honor to be here. I've written many books about law and some about regulation and if you told me a year ago that I was going to do a book on Star Wars, I would have thought it was more likely than I was playing professional hockey in the Stanley Cup championships.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: The origins of the book, I can show you, that's the guy, that's my son. He's now 7-years-old, at the age of 5, he got hooked by Star Wars and when he got hooked by Star Wars, I got intrigued by two questions. The first is, "how does creativity work" and the second is "what are the sources of success." The nutshell thing I learned about the sources of creativity is that we often think that there is planning and organization that produces Harry Potter novels or successful presidential candidates or fantastically culture changing movies, but it's more a burst of imagination that are laid that we are not foreseen by the supposed planner.

The role of serendipity in the artistic imagination, as in politics, as in the life of each person in this room, imagine who your friends are or your partner or what your job is or what you did yesterday, the role of serendipity cannot be overrated. It is huge and that's what happened with Star Wars, its creation.

In terms of its success, human beings have a tendency to attribute success to culture or timing that's often incorrect or a fairy tale. Success is often a product of who likes what a lot, at what time in the product's life cycle, and by product, yes I mean the President of the United States right now who benefited from a lot of people, including yours truly. I was a tiny contributor but one of the mountains of tiny contributors, who liked them early including the Republican Presidential nominee, including many of the most prominent and successful companies in the United States.

People liked them early and that produced success that was anything but foreordained. Now to justify what I've just said about the creative imagination and about the absence of planning and about the serendipitous and accidental nature of cultural success and failure would take many slides which I confess I planned to provide here, in the next minutes, but I decided, because I met a friend about half an hour ago, as I was walking over, to abandon the slides and to talk to all of you about something else. And the something else is signaled by this, which was one of forty slides, the first of the forty slides.

It's going to be the only slide you are going to see. Here is George Lucas speaking recently. Everybody has the choice of being a hero or not being a hero, every day of their lives. You can either help somebody, you can be compassionate toward people, you can treat people with dignity or not.

Here's Yoda, you all know who Yoda is. He was wrong on crucial topics, but the wisest person in the galaxy. He said "difficult to see, always in motion is the future." Here is Lawrence Kasdan, George Lucas' great coauthor on several of the Star Wars movies, this is also very recent. It's the biggest event show you can have, making up your own life and it's true for everybody, it's infinite possibility.

Now let's go back to the making of the third and release order of the movies, 'Return of the Jedi.' This is shaped in real time, a sharp artistic disagreement, almost a war

between George Lucas, the mastermind behind Star Wars, at the very height of his artistic powers, and Lawrence Kasdan, whom you have heard about, one of the most brilliant screenwriters in the history of American film. They are writing it together, and I am going to tell you right now, the clash of two Jedi masters, with radically different visions for the film.

Kasdan: I think he should kill Luke, have Leia take over.

Lucas: You don't want to kill Luke.

Kasdan: Okay, then kill Yoda.

Lucas: I don't want to kill Yoda, you don't have to kill people. You're a product of the 1980's, you don't go around killing people. That's not nice.

Kasdan: No, I'm not. I'm trying to give the story some kind of an edge to it.

Lucas: By killing somebody, you alienate the audience.

Kasdan now going for the jugular in the dialogue, meaning he is going to his own soul.

Kasdan: I'm saying that the movie has more emotional weight. If someone you love is lost along the way, the journey has more impact.

Lucas: I don't like that and I don't believe that.

In my view, Lucas wins the argument by a knockout. Those are precious words, I don't like that and I don't believe that. They are precious because, partly of how they are ordered, not liking proceeds and helps account for not believing. Isn't that how we all sometimes are? That's the psychologists' idea of motivated reasoning. I don't like what Kasdan says, I don't believe it either.

A quotation for you from the Bible. This is from Isaiah. "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Here's George Lucas speaking of his father, "He wanted me to go into his business. I said, I am absolutely not going to do it. He wanted me to sell office equipment in a store. I said I will

never go to work every day, doing the same thing day in and day out."

My son Declan, whose picture you see, to whom the book is dedicated, is 7-years-old. Three years ago, he was joined by his sister, whose name is Rianne (phonetics). Rianne was and (inaudible) remains very close to his mother, and when Rianne was born, I had a kind of a tremor inside, meaning an acute sense that he might feel some kind of threat and loss.

His mother was being taken over by the little one, exactly the same thing that happened to me when Declan was born, so I sympathized with the guy. Within a few weeks after his sister came home, I found myself singing my son a song. I am not going to sing it to you, I am only going to tell you the words, singing myself a song from the deepest depths of my unconscious that managed to be both idiotic and offensive, so prepare yourself.

It had just one line, sung over and over, with a combination of giddy delight and other certainty. "Daddies are for boys, and mommies are for girls." Declan pretended to dislike it or at least to think that it was wrong. He responded by singing right back instantaneously to the same terrible tune. "Daddies are for girls and mommies are for boys." I responded by saying, "Declan, you must be really tired and all confused, you are singing the song all wrong, did you get enough sleep last night?" He came right back at me, "Daddy, you must be working too hard and confused, did you get enough sleep last night?"

Whenever I come back from a trip like this one, I pick him right up and tell him, "Declan, this is completely amazing, you are not going to believe it. I was watching a news program in a hotel room in California, and a commercial came on and there were these people and everyone started singing Daddies are for boys, and mommies are for girls, so it's true". He would answer, "Daddy, while you were gone, I was watching a baseball game at home, and a commercial came on and everyone started singing, daddies are for girls and mommies are for boys. So you must be confused. Are you very tired?"

Declan still pretends as of last week to dislike our little song, but he's always known what it is about. The song originally said, "You have a baby sister, and she takes some of your mother's time, but your dad is here for you." Its meaning is simpler now, I'm here for you. There's evidence that he gets

that. Whenever my wife and I are out late for dinner, he falls asleep on our bed, in our bedroom.

As I pick him up, Gods truth, I start whistling the insipid tune to a particular song. He is sound asleep, he is like a rock, but every time she smiles. Rianne has just turned four, and she has heard this song countless times in it's two versions. Are you worrying about Rianne right now? Okay. You will hear. You are going to stop worrying in a moment, sometimes she sings with delight, "Daddies are for girls and mommies are for boys." Sometimes she sings with equivalent delight, "Daddies are for boys and mommies are for girls." Both versions are right. They are complements, they are not contradictions. Rianne is a smart kid and she knows exactly what she is talking about.

To every child, a boy or a girl, a father must seem at times to be a kind of Darth Vader. Think if you would about your own father, wasn't there a moment and for many people, much more than that when he was Darth Vader. Big, frightening, a deep voice, insanely powerful, and at least at some level, potentially violent.

For any child, boy or girl, a father is both Jedi and Sith, Obi-Wan, gentle and calming and good, and Vader, fierce and terrifying. Almost every dad seems to have access to the dark side, at least to a child, and with his immense power he seems capable, doesn't he, of anything. Every dad in the room, you already know this? It's so.

In the first Star Wars trilogy, Lucas got very primal about fathers and sons, and while his tale speaks to everyone, he is given some hints about why. His relationship with his dad was troubled, even tortured. George senior was known as a domineering person and those who know Lucas have always said that the relationship between his father and himself was a source for the tale of the Star Wars saga.

Lucas' father didn't try to convince him to go to the dark side or to rule the universe, as father and son, but he did tell him to abandon his day dreams and to get in the stationary business. By all accounts, their confrontations on this subject were turbulent and for a time, they ended up literally estranged. It's worth pausing over that even if it's temporary, an estrangement between a parent and a child is extraordinarily painful. Been there, done that.

As Lucas put it matter of factly with defiance but with defiance, at 18 we had this big break. He wanted me to go into his business and I refused. His father decades later said, "I fought him. I didn't want him to go into that damn movie business." Even though George senior uttered those words a long time after, can't you even now feel the fire? "Damn movie business."

There were no light sabers, no one lost a hand, but every son yearns for his father's approval, and Lucas had a tough time getting his. Movingly Lucas now says, "You only have to accomplish one thing in life and that's to make your parents proud of you." More personally and quite gently Lucas said, "Parents try as hard as they can to do the right thing. They aren't purposely out to get you. They don't want to be Darth Vader."

Lucas was able to reconcile with his father. Here are his words, "He lived to see me finally go from a worthless, as he would call it, late bloomer to actually being successful. I gave him the one thing every parent wants and I think there is a lot of pain and understanding in these words to have your kid be safe and able to take care of themselves. That was all he really wanted and that's what he got."

It's not irrelevant that after 'Return of the Jedi' Lucas abandoned movie making for just one reason, he wanted to be a good father. As just a few months ago on Charlie Rose, why Charlie Rose? What did he wanted the first line of his obituary to say, he responded without an instant's hesitation "I was a great dad."

The first two trilogies of Star Wars should be called 'The Redemption of Anakin Skywalker'. Lucas himself calls them 'The tragedy of Anakin Skywalker.' I don't like that and I don't believe that. 'The Redemption of Anakin Skywalker.' The redemption occurs as a result of intense attachment that form of attachment is the whole reason for Anakin's descent to the dark side. It's why he falls. He can't bear to lose his bellowed.

Attachment is also the reason he returns to the light. He can't stand to see his son die. In the end, Star Wars insists that you can't be redeemed without attachment. That's the strongest message of the saga and that's what makes it speak to people's deepest selves.

Redemption has a lot to do with forgiveness. If you are forgiven, most of all by yourself, you can be redeemed. Lucas forgives his father, who is kind of the worst person in the galaxy. A good lesson for children everywhere, if Luke can do that, then surely any parent can be forgiven. A good lesson for any grudge holders in Aspen today, let it go.

Star Wars isn't limited to any particular religion, but it can claim to be a genuinely Christian tale in its story of redemption. In a new hope, Anakin is the satanic figure, the embodiment of evil. He is made good because his father insists on seeing good in him. That's what the redemption scene ends up looking like and here is the text:

Darth Vader: Luke, help me take this mask off.

Luke: But you will die.

Darth Vader -- remember this scene?

Darth Vader: Nothing can stop that now, just for once, let me look on you with my own eyes.

Luke takes off Vader's mask, one piece at a time and sees the face of a pale, scarred, old man, his father Anakin and this is the only time in the three scripts -- the first time in the three scripts that Vader is referred to as Anakin. Anakin sadly looks at Luke, but then gives him a tired smile. Anakin, and now he is called Anakin the script, "now, go my son, leave me."

Luke: No, you are coming with me. I will not leave you here. I have got to save you.

Anakin: You already have Luke, you are right. You are right about me. Tell your sister you were right.

And then he dies. For what Lucas called a fairytale, isn't that good? It's very good. It's even great. And here's a bit from the novelization. "The boy was good and the boy had come from him, so there must have been good in him too. He smiled up again at his son, and for the first time loved him, and for the first time in many long years, loved himself again as well."

The sheer quality of the dialogue here is an upset. George Lucas knows myth and he has a world historical visual imagination, but most of the time, emotions aren't exactly his

strong suit. While he enjoys editing, he doesn't always like working with people.

In the prequels, it's droids and more droids, droid armies everywhere, all droids all the time. Harrison Ford famously told him, "You can type this shit George, but you can't say it." He confesses that he struggles with dialogue. He said "I think I am a terrible writer." Once he admitted, "I would be the first person to say I just can't write dialogue. I don't particularly like dialogue, which is a big part of the problem." And as Harrison Ford remarked in an interview very recently, "George isn't the best in dealing with human situations, to say the least."

But at the crucial moment in the original trilogy, which you have just heard, Lucas delivered. He was the best at dealing with that particular human situation, and he knew exactly what he was doing. He didn't trick anybody. Lucas had a lot of sources for the star war saga. His major one, as some of you may know, is Joseph Campbell's tale of the hero with a thousand faces.

Lucas referred to Campbell as 'My Yoda' and Campbell, who was actually discovered by Jacqueline Bouvier as she then was called that was her great achievement as an editor, argued that religion and myths of multiple kinds, all have a same structure. They are monomyth and Campbell's claim was, you can go to India or African, look at Christianity or Islam and Judaism, they all basically are telling the same story. And without making any contested theological claim, Campbell urged this is the monomyth that is deeply wired into the human mind.

The whole series tracks Campbell's account but the notion of a father sacrificing himself and repudiating the cause of his entire life and dying in order to save his son, that's Lucas's own. It's highly original. That's what tops "I am your father." The prequels are extensively about one thing, the perils of attachment.

In Anakin's words, attachment is forbidden, possession is forbidden. Yoda, let go of fear and loss cannot harm you. Influenced by Buddhism, Lucas self-consciously portrayed a person turning to evil, because he could not let go of his mother and his beloved. That's what leads him to the dark side. Yoda famously, "train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose." Yoda again "of the dark side despair is." By the

way, my current view is there are three mortal sins: They are bullying, snark (phonetics) and despair. Argue if you wish.

Yoda again, of the dark side, despair is-- the reason this is from the novelization. Even despair is attachment. It is a grip clenched upon pain that's really good. See that the point here is not ambiguous. If you are attached to someone, you become vulnerable.

Yoda most famously "fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering" true, we recognize that. Serene detachment is the best path and the only safe one because it prevents catastrophic choices. The Siths get their revenge only because of Anakin's fear of death, so there is a plan, the Foust tale Dr. Foust, but Lucas has got something very original here too. It's not the fear of his own death, but of people that he loves, Anakin chooses disastrously as a result of that fear.

Both Stoicism and Buddhism make strong pleas for detachment and then emphasizing the perils associated with the fear of loss, Star Wars movies borrow heavily from those traditions, but in return of the Jedi, Anakin gets redeemed, not by distance and serenity but by their opposite. He cures the emperor because he cannot bear to see his son die, whatever Yoda said, Anakin is redeemed by fear of loss, love not detachment and so he is, when making the redemptive choice, perfectly continuous with his earlier self, showing the exact same characteristics that led him to the dark side.

For those who aren't Star Wars aficionados in the room, I might be getting a little too geekish here, so let me clarify. In the underrated movie "Revenge of the Sith" Anakin's fall to the dark side, is planned almost precisely the same, as in the scene of "Return of the Jedi" in which, Luke ultimately chooses to decline the dark side and says, "I am a Jedi, like my father before me" I think one of the most moving lines in motion pictures in last 50 years because what he is saying there, I'm a Jedi like my father before me, he is claiming his commonality with his father and claiming that his father is a Jedi, not a Sith, which actually he had no way of knowing it, but actually is literally true and in claiming that he is reversing the bad choice that his father made. In movies they were made decades later and the -- Lucas could not possibly have sketched out at that time. That's kind of brilliant narrative construction.

Okay. When Lucas pressed that point, that is the commonality between Anakin's redemptive choice saving his son and his following choice bowing to the emperor, the force was unquestionably with him. In terms of narrative, that's his finest moment. The redemption of Anakin's Skywalker, my name for the saga, transcends any individual's personal struggles. It's real theme is universal. By their innocence and goodness, and I bet we have a lot of parents in the room, and everyone here was a child once, by their innocence and goodness, by their boundless capacity for forgiveness and by the sheer power of their faith and hope children redeem their parents bringing out their best selves.

And as every child knows deep in his heart, any parent, anyone is likely to choose to risk his life to save his child's even if it means a contest with the emperor himself and when he makes that choice, the force is going to be right there with him. I like that and I believe it. Thanks.

(Applause)

MR. SUNSTEIN: Questions, comments, all things Star Wars.

SPEAKER: I'm going to botch the quote, but President Obama has now said a couple of times about sons and fathers that hopefully you remember the quote exactly, but they're all trying to prove their fathers wrong or outdo their fathers, something to that effect, and I wanted to know and this book was dreamed from my father, so your thoughts on those two items.

MR. SUNSTEIN: It is a great line and I don't have it precisely either, but clearly the President's book attests to the depth of his complex relationship with his father who wasn't there for him. His father wasn't Darth Vader. He didn't, you know, go to the dark side, but he wasn't around in the way that President Obama actually is for his children. So I think the President is quite alert to the need that a son, daughter too, they have that for dad and that's undoubtedly marked his life in many ways personal and political. So some story recently about what a terrific father President Obama is and I knew him in Chicago from the same faculty gathering, he is a just a -- he's a great father, doesn't matter what his job is, and you know, it's reasonable to say that his own struggles in coming to terms with his largely absent father contributed to his clarity on that one. Yeah.

SPEAKER: Professor Sunstein, I was wondering if we could get your opinion on the latest Star Wars movie, the seventh one.

MR. SUNSTEIN: Okay. Well, I'll tell you *The Empire Strikes Back* is not only the best of the Star Wars movies, it's the best movie ever made.

(Applause)

MR. SUNSTEIN: *A New Hope* is not only the second best of the movies, it's the second best movie ever made. *Return of The Jedi*, it is the third best of the Star Wars movies and it is the third best movie ever made.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: The prequels are underrated and I won't tell you the order, but they are the fourth, fifth and sixth best movies ever made.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: *The Force Awakens* is among the seven best movies ever made. Maybe get a little less ridiculous, I kind of got overcome by Star Wars writing this book, so maybe I'm exaggerating how amazing they all are. I think there are two possible views of *The Force Awakens* and they're both reasonable. One view is, it doesn't have the kind of bursting originality or the visual, what's the right word, out of this worldness of George Lucas, and I think the visual out of this worldness, it can be seen in everyone of the six, it can't really be seen in *The Force Awakens*.

The Force Awakens is visually superb, but it doesn't have the where did that come from feeling of the others. It also borrows pretty clearly on *A New Hope* in particular and is a bit of rerun. So it would be -- the film critic of a certain sword would turn up the nose and say, no, it's all right. I have a much higher opinion of it, which is that for Abrams and Kasdan, the coauthor, to produce something that really worked, that I think has not a dull moment that produces a series of new mysteries that are intriguing people, that re-launches the franchise and is so surefooted.

So whatever Lucas is, you know, I think the world of Lucas, he wasn't surefooted, he made mistakes, not only in the

prequels, but the others, these guys, this team, they are surefooted. And so I think it's terrific. I'm hoping it will get more complicated and original and surprising as the saga continues, but hats off to the team and I think Rey is a great character and let's just put it, she's not a worse actor than Mark Hamill.

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. That was really surprising. I'm not actually that much of a Star Wars fan, I don't know much about the movies, but I was really struck by your admitting of the theme of fathers and sons, as somebody with a tense relationship with my own parents. But I was also struck by your drawing up on Joseph Campbell and the connections he made, and I'm a folklorist. And I've been thinking more about the themes of masculinity and femininity in those kinds of -- in how Joseph Campbell constructed those things. So I'm going back to that snippet of dialogue that he had between Lucas and Kasdan where Kasdan's instinct was to kill off Luke and had the story be about Leia. So I'm just curious as to how you might have seen that, how might that have played out differently if that had been a story more about daughters and fathers in -- to put potential thereof.

MR. SUNSTEIN: I'm hoping we're going to see that in the next movies, so it's a fantastic question. I think in their deepest, you know, at ground level, the father, daughter, and the son, and the son, father, it's the same. So we could have cultural stereotypes of various sorts that are real in cultures because of ideas of masculinity and femininity. So I could say some things that are true and obvious that a boy kind of wants to be the dad as a man and most girls don't want to be the dad as a man, so that's -- that is a difference, but I think that doesn't get at the -- at bedrock where, you know, I have two daughters and I have a boy, and don't be really empirical here.

So, you know, three data points, but basically it so isn't that what Lucas said is true, every parent, mother or father, wants the son or daughter to be safe and able to care of himself or herself, that's it. That's kind of it, isn't it? And that is what son or daughter craves the -- a father to help provide that feeling of safety and love as kind of a part of it. So bedrock in terms of the relationships, I think they have much more in common than we standardly think and the cultures emphasize, but your point is fantastic, what if Leia had taken over? That would be really interesting if Luke had died and

Leia is kick ass, so if you don't know the movies the thing you have to know about Leia is she's kick ass. And she is -- she shoots well, if she needed to be -- learn to use lightsaber, I'm confident she would learn to use a lightsaber, it's kind of the leader of the bunch she is a better kind of top of the heap person than Luke who kind of struggles not to be an earnest farmboy. So it could have been made to work.

I'll tell you this book came from a dear friend who said that I should show the movie to Declan, she was the source of that. My wife and I saw the movie with her and her partner, the new one, *The Force Awakens*. After *The Force Awakens* she went in bathroom and cried for 10 minutes, somebody dies, and she said after, that's it, I'm done, I'm not going to see any more of these movies. Now I'm going to see everyone of these movies you are probably not surprised to hear, but the fact that a big character died in *The Force Awakens*, if it weren't Lawrence Kasdan who was responsible I would have a hard time forgiving him. I would go dark side on him.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: But it's Lawrence Kasdan, he is one of the greats. But the point I think that Lucas was on to which I like and believe is in at least certain kinds of movies you don't want people going into the bathroom and crying after that even if rather people in the movies deepens the experience, don't make people go crying because someone they really care about dies, don't do that.

If Luke had died, now some people weren't that high on Luke, but if Luke had died, that's terrible, people, if they are not going to cry, they're going to say Luke died, you're kidding me, he's dead? So that would have encrusted the movie with a sense of tragedy. One thing by the way in writing a book sometimes, this is unlike radically different from any book I've ever done and there are experiences in the writing of it which are literally unbelievable and I'm going to tell you one right now, it's the -- the passage I read you from Kasdan I found after immense and obsessive and kind of I really am going to have explain to my wife why I did this, reading everything about Star Wars and I found this passage in a book of maybe 800 pages on the bottom of page 342 and put in my book, my draft. Then very recently, in the last stages of the book, when it was in copy, there was an interview with Lawrence Kasdan. Now there aren't many people who read every interview with Lawrence Kasdan. I'm one of those few, I read every interview of

Lawrence Kasdan, and in the interview I found in the middle he said, you know, I was always hoping that I could get someone dead, and I failed, Lucas overrode me, finally in the new one I was able to do it.

I had -- gosh, you remember that conversation from many decades ago, remember that he lost and won the next time. Would have been a -- the next time meaning 2016 when the conversation was in the 1980s. So it would have been a very different kind of movie, I think not mostly because of fathers and daughters rather than fathers and sons, but because of what have been marked by the tragic loss of a hero. Yeah.

SPEAKER: Thank you. You ended your speech by saying that the force is with parents. I know what that means for Star Wars, but outside the world of fiction what is this force that you believe is with parents?

MR. SUNSTEIN: Okay, so there are three ways. Let's see if I can reconstruct this. I at one point thought there were three ways of thinking about the force. I think I have them. The first way to think about it is theological, and Lucas has, let's say, given foundations in his own mind for thinking of the force in some kind theological way. So if you like that, believe it. That's fair to -- that's not unfair to the movies.

A second way to think of it is that it's about connections among people. When Obi-Wan Kenobi says in *A New Hope*, and you know, it's a little bit bizarre to be talking about these cartoon-like movies based originally on Flash Gordon as if they are repository of, you know, wisdom, but I think these movies are the shallowest movies that have ever done really well and they're also very deep. So Obi-Wan says to Luke when explaining the force, says it's life force that connects and binds all living things.

You know, you don't need to have a theological view of that to think, you know, when one human being looks another in the eye, there's something there that happens, there is a connection, and you know, the people may not know each other or the family members or live in the same city, it's instant and it's there. And that's one way of thinking about the force that I think is also true to the movies, and it also I think is true to the -- Lucas' phrase, we can be a hero every day of our lives. We can treat with -- someone with dignity or not. And one thing Lucas isn't is a sanctimonious person. So when he

says that it's not a Hallmark card, it's kind of that's just how it is.

The third way is I think Kasdan's own way, so Kasdan was asked fairly recently, you know, what lines that you've written do you particularly like and he said the best line I ever wrote was not in Star Wars and in the Star Wars movies, it was Indiana Jones and he said there was a scene where Indiana Jones and his friend says what's your plan and Indiana Jones response, plan, I have no plan, I'm making it all up as I go long. And then Kasdan elaborates and he says that's it, that's the -- that's how it is. That -- he's I think 67 years old now, he said 67 years old now, I'm making it up as I go along. I don't know what next year is going to be like. There are going to be a ton of surprises and he says that you can almost hear the smile on his face as he's saying these things that are on the page.

So that's the biggest adventure you could have, it's the life force. I like to think it's not a coincidence that he uses the word force and if you trace the movies they are as much as they're about redemption and attachment and parents and children, there may be even more about freedom of choice. So Luke originally says he's not going to go to Alderaan with Obi-Wan and Obi-Wan says, well, you must do what you think is right of course and Han Solo decides to abandon the rebellion and leave it to its own resources. And Leia says everyone has to take their own path and Han goes away and of course chooses to come back at the last moment and saves his buddy who would otherwise die at the hands of his own father.

In the underrated *Revenge of the Sheev*, the emperor to be, the emperor, the worst person in the galaxy, even worse than Darth Vader is being killed by a Jedi and what are his words to then Anakin, you must choose. The Sheev respect freedom of choice. That's the one thing they are insistent on. If you're going to lose your soul, you have to do it on your own and in the new one, a point for Abrams in the new one *The Force Awakens*, you know, the key characters are making free choices and there it's even clearer than in the Lucas movies, where Rey initially declines to lift the lightsaber, then she chooses to do so. A strong trooper abandons it because he feels blood on his helmet and becomes a hero of the saga. That's all over *The Force Awakens*, so it's kind of eerie the extent to which freedom of choices is a marker at all these times.

SPEAKER: Two controversial questions, did Han shoot first and is Rey Palpatine's sibling -- offspring?

MR. SUNSTEIN: Well, on Rey's parentage I actually know and a drone strike would get me within about 15 seconds if I said I don't know -- in fact I don't know Rey's parentage. That's a very interesting question -- an interesting way to go and what I love about it of all the rumors I've heard that one I hadn't heard, what's beautiful about what you said, and it will be interesting, is it has the same kick as the I'm your father one does. So I'm your father by the way which was I'm very confident a late innovation by George Lucas, it wasn't like he had that at mind all along, it was a kind of click in the brain that made everything different, but also sense of it, like a Supreme Court decision which is like an episode which makes the fabric of our free speech law different. So the notion of I am your father moment seems to me extremely interesting and what you're describing that would be an I am your father thing. Han shot first, not the slightest doubt.

SPEAKER: How much opportunity have you had to speak with George Lucas or interaction?

MR. SUNSTEIN: Okay, so I've had one fairly long conversation with George Lucas and as I recall someone told him I was writing a book about Star Wars and I think he might have said isn't everybody?

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: When he didn't seem that interested in talking to yet another person who was writing a book about Star Wars, though he was completely courteous, he heard that I've worked in the Obama administration and then we had a conversation about foreign policy where he has very interesting convictions and that's what we wanted to talk about, not about Star Wars.

I've had -- midst of a big store and one of the most noteworthy moments was I was on some show with some kind of famous anchor person who was, you know, purporting to know all about my book and said, you know, and what's amazing, she said this on air is that Kas did all these interviews and talked to the all the principles -- I did no interviews, I wanted to do no interviews, the last thing George Lucas needs is a law professor asking him about Star Wars. So I thought that he would hate that interaction, I'd want to shoot myself, so I have not talked

to him at all about Star Wars. I know a little bit his wife Mellody actually through I didn't -- I knew her, I didn't know they were married actually, I knew her through some professional connection and I don't hope he reads the book, I think he, you know, he did something very great and he should enjoy his life.

SPEAKER: So speaking of foreign policy, what foreign policy principles do you believe from Star Wars and what does that kind of say about Lucas' views?

MR. SUNSTEIN: Okay, so I have a division of family -- division of labor within my family, which is my wife, who is the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, speaks about foreign policy and I speak about domestic policy, so maybe I can say one thing about foreign policy, which is free trade is a good thing and Star Wars pretty clear on that.

SPEAKER: If no one else will ask it, I'll ask what some of George Lucas' surprising foreign policy opinions were?

MR. SUNSTEIN: Well, I think as with the President of the United States, so with George Lucas. One shouldn't disclose private conversations.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: But I will say something about him which is that he is -- personally I found -- I define him as intense, informed and completely present, a little like, you know, someone in their 20s who was just, you know, not childish at all, but just very focused and in a way that's really impressive, no drifting as, you know, some people 30s and over they're drifting in the conversation, no drift with him. He has said that the defining characteristics of his movies is effervescent giddiness and he went on in giving the sense that's very surprising because I'm not at all like that as a person. As far as I could tell, he's right, he's not at all like that as a person, he is present and intense. Anymore?

SPEAKER: We have time for one more and then everyone should note that he will be signing books out in the lobby afterward, so make sure your take advantage of that.

SPEAKER: Did your son give you any feedback on the book?

MR. SUNSTEIN: I beg you what?

SPEAKER: Did your son have any feedback for you on the book?

MR. SUNSTEIN: He said why can't we play baseball now.

(Laughter)

MR. SUNSTEIN: He knows the book is dedicated to him. I think he's moderately pleased by it, but he really wants to play baseball all day. Thank you.

(Applause)

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