

= Harmy 's Despecialized Edition =

Harmy 's Despecialized Edition is a series of fan edits of the first three films in the George Lucas @-@ created Star Wars franchise : Star Wars , The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi . The edits were created by a team of Star Wars fans led by Petr " Harmy " Harmá?ek , an English teacher from Plze? , Czech Republic . The original Star Wars trilogy was released theatrically by 20th Century Fox for Lucasfilm between 1977 and 1983 . Subsequent releases on home media , such as the 1997 " Special Edition " releases , introduced significant changes to the films , including additional scenes and new computer @-@ generated imagery ? these changes were met with a mixed response from critics . As of 2014 , the films are no longer widely available in their original theatrical releases .

Harmá?ek felt that altering the films in this way constituted " an act of cultural vandalism " , and in 2010 was inspired to create his own series of fan edits that restored the theatrical releases in high @-@ definition . With no experience in professional film editing , he taught himself as he went , using programs such as Avisynth and Adobe After Effects . Taking the 1993 LaserDisc releases as a guide and a majority of source material from the 2011 Blu @-@ ray releases , Harmá?ek and a team of eight other fans constructed the edits over many thousands of hours of work . In 2011 , one year after the project had begun , the first version of Harmy 's Despecialized Edition was published online . Updated versions have been created in the years that followed .

As a fan edit , Harmy 's Despecialized Edition cannot be legally bought or sold , and is " to be shared among legal owners of the officially available releases only " . Consequently , the films are only available via various BitTorrent trackers . Reaction to the project has been positive : Nathan Barry of Wired praised the films as " an absolute joy to watch " , while Gizmodo described them as " very , very good " . Sean Hutchinson of Inverse placed Harmy 's Despecialized Edition at number one on his list of the best Star Wars fan edits and called them " the perfect pre @-@ 1997 way to experience the saga " .

= = Background = =

The original Star Wars trilogy was a Lucasfilm production released theatrically by 20th Century Fox between 1977 and 1983 , and was subsequently released on home media during the 1980s and 1990s . The films were distributed by CBS / Fox Video on several formats , such as VHS , Betamax and LaserDisc . In 1997 , to coincide with the 20th anniversary of Star Wars , Lucas rereleased new cuts of the trilogy to theaters , naming them the " Special Editions " . The Special Editions made a number of changes to the original releases , including additions such as enhanced digital effects , previously unreleased scenes , and entirely new CGI sequences .

Reaction to the new cuts was mixed , with commentators criticising unnecessary additions such as a computer @-@ generated Jabba the Hutt in the first film and a new musical number in Return of the Jedi ; an alteration involving the bounty hunter Greedo shooting at Han Solo drew significant ire . Further changes to the series were added to the 2004 DVD and the 2011 Blu @-@ ray releases ? these changes also drew criticism . The final release of the original cuts was in 2006 , when unrestored masters used for the 1993 LaserDisc were added as a bonus feature to a limited run of DVDs under the name George 's Original Unaltered Trilogy (GOUT) . In 2010 , Lucas stated that bringing the original cuts to Blu @-@ ray would be a " very , very expensive " process ; as of 2014 , the films are only widely available in their altered versions .

As a result of these changes , a group of fans met on various Internet forums to construct higher quality cuts as fan edits by using the available home media and blending the Special Edition DVDs with the LaserDisc transfers . One such edit for The Empire Strikes Back was created by Star Wars fan Adywan .

= = Production = =

=== Conception ===

Petr Hrmáek (known online by the alias " Hrmý ") had watched a dubbed version of the original cut of Star Wars at the age of six , and had then seen the Special Editions of The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi on their 1997 release . Although initially admiring them , he became disappointed when he learnt how much the films had been changed retroactively ; he argued that replacing the original effects with re @-@ composited digital effects was " an act of cultural vandalism " . A fan of the original trilogy , he had written his undergraduate thesis on their cultural impact . After seeing a trailer for Adywan 's cut of The Empire Strikes Back , Hrmáek was inspired to create a version of the film that " undid " the post @-@ 1977 changes and restored the theatrical releases in high @-@ definition . He described his motivation as : " I wanted to be able to show people who haven 't seen Star Wars yet , like my little brother or my girlfriend , the original , Oscar @-@ winning version , but I didn 't want to have to show it to them in bad quality . " Hrmáek 's edits were the first to recreate the theatrical releases in HD .

=== Editing ===

Hrmáek began creating his new cuts in 2010 . At the time , he was working as an English teacher in Plze , Czech Republic , and had no professional experience with film editing . Instead , he taught himself as the project progressed , beginning with Photoshop skills that he had developed in college . To remove the post @-@ 1977 changes , Hrmáek was required to go through the film frame @-@ by @-@ frame , correcting colors and rotoscoping . Undoing some shots took only an hour , while others took hundreds . Lightsabers were color @-@ corrected , shots of the Millennium Falcon cockpit were cropped , Boba Fett 's voice was changed , and CGI characters and backgrounds were removed . Most of the source material used for Hrmý 's Despecialized Edition was taken from the 2011 Blu @-@ ray release , while other sequences were upscaled from GOUT . To create the cuts , source material was taken from the 2011 Blu @-@ ray releases , HDTV broadcasts of the 2004 DVDs , GOUT , digital broadcasts of the 1997 Special Edition , the 1993 LaserDiscs , digital transfers of a Spanish 35 mm Kodak LPP and 70 mm film cels , a 16 mm print and still images of the original matte paintings . Hrmáek edited these sources together using programs such as Avisynth and Adobe After Effects .

To help , Hrmáek was assisted by a group of similarly @-@ minded fans from the website OriginalTrilogy.com , whom he knew by their online aliases Dark Jedi , YouToo , Puggo , Team Negative 1 , Belbucus , Hairy _ Hen , CatBus and Laserschwert . In total , the project took thousands of hours of work between them . In 2011 , one year after the project had begun , the first version of Hrmý 's Despecialized Edition was published online ; new and updated versions have been created regularly in the five years that followed . As of August 2014 , the most recent version is v2.5 . As a result of the project , Hrmáek was able to quit his teaching job and in 2015 was hired by UltraFlix to prepare and restore a library of 4K @-@ encoded films for sale and rent .

=== Legality ===

The legal standing of Hrmý 's Despecialized Edition is contentious . As fan edits , the cuts tread a line between Fair Use and copyright infringement . OriginalTrilogy.com states that the edits are " made for culturally historical and educational purposes " and that they are " to be shared among legal owners of the officially available releases only " . Consequently , the films are only available via various BitTorrent trackers . Hrmáek himself remarked : " I 'm convinced that 99 % of people who download this already bought Star Wars 10 times over on DVD . " As of November 2015 , he has received no legal issues from Lucasfilm over the Despecialized Edition .

=== Reception ===

Reaction to Hrmý 's Despecialized Edition has been positive . Writing for Inverse , Sean

Hutchinson placed it at number one on his list of the best Star Wars fan edits , and described them as " the perfect pre @-@ 1997 way to experience the saga " . Whitson Gordon of Lifehacker called the edits " the best version of Star Wars you can watch " , and named them " the version of Star Wars we 've all been clamoring for the last 20 years " . Similarly , Nathan Barry of Wired praised the films as " an absolute joy to watch " , while Gizmodo described them as " very , very good " . In an article listing Ars Technica 's favorite Star Wars items , Sam Machkovech selected Harmy 's Despecialized Edition , calling them " a treat " .