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'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' Interview: Diego Luna Talks Cassian, How Film Brought Him Closer To His Kids [EXCLUSIVE]

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By **Maria G. Valdez**, Dec 16 2016, 05:10PM EST



Latin Times sat down with Diego Luna to talk about "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" and he told us a lot about his character and how this movie has brought him closer to his kids. Getty

When we found out **Diego Luna** was going to be in the new "Star Wars" movie, "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," our hearts filled up with pride and joy. Finally! A Latino actor starring in such a big Hollywood production and getting a lot of camera time in a role that is far away from stereotypes. It is a dream come true not only for us as spectators, but also for Diego, who considers this opportunity a big blessing. Captain Cassian Andor, the role Luna plays, is an accomplished Alliance Intelligence officer with combat field experience. He commands respect from his Rebel troops with his ability to keep a cool head under fire and complete his missions with minimal resources.

For Diego, however, this was a role completely different from what he was used to. He started his acting career in famous Mexican telenovelas such as "Carrusel," "El Abuelo y Yo" and "El Premio Mayor" but really became a mainstream name in Hollywood after starring in "Y Tu Mamá También,"

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which put him in the radar of many important directors. He went on to have roles alongside Jon Bon Jovi in "Vampires: Los Muertos" (2002) and the Academy Award-winning "Frida" (2002). He also starred in "Open Range," "Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights," "The Terminal," and "Criminal." In 2008, he starred in the Harvey Milk biopic "Milk," as his emotionally unstable lover, Jack Lira.

But now, Diego's talent will reach an even bigger audience, starring in "[Rogue One: A Star Wars Story](#)," an all-new epic adventure during a time of conflict, when a group of unlikely heroes band together on a mission to steal the plans to the Death Star, the Empire's ultimate weapon of destruction. This key event in the Star Wars timeline brings together ordinary people who choose to do extraordinary things, and in doing so, become part of something greater than themselves.

"Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" was directed by Gareth Edwards and besides Diego, stars Felicity Jones, Ben Mendelsohn, Donnie Yen, Mads Mikkelsen, Alan Tudyk, Riz Ahmed, Jiang Wen and Forest Whitaker. Kathleen Kennedy, Allison Shearmur and Simon Emanuel are producing, with John Knoll and Jason McGatlin serving as executive producers. The story is by John Knoll and Gary Whitta, and the screenplay is by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy. "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" opens in U.S. theaters Today, December 16, 2016.

Latin Times had the opportunity of sitting down with Diego to discuss this project, and this is what he told us.

Latin Times: First of all, congratulations! You're the only Mexican to have landed a leading role in a "Star Wars" movie. How do you feel?

Diego Luna: *I feel very proud and very lucky. There's moments when I go "really? This is really happening?" because I didn't see it coming. It's not like I told my agent "oh please, you have to get me an audition for Star Wars, I wanna be part of Star Wars!" I didn't. I probably sent a message to the universe by being just a fan of the film but I never actually saw it coming. But one day I received a call, and it was Gareth Edwards, who said, "I would like to work with you, do you mind going into the journey of going through all the filters, because we have to convince many people, I'm just the director here and there's tons of people who have to agree, but if you want to go on this journey with me, I can tell you, you're the one I want to work with." And I was like "Oh my God!" and I couldn't believe it, I started working hard to get it. I saw that it was a great opportunity and I had the director on my side, and he was very honest through the whole process, and made me feel respected, and here I am!*

LT: Did you ever feel self-conscious throughout the whole process of making this film?

DL: *Yeah! There were many moments where I thought: "Oh my God, I can't believe this is happening!" and then I would be like a fan on set, looking at everything and going "this is insane!" because our film happens right before Episode IV: A New Hope, and that's the first film I saw, so this film connects me to my childhood, to that first film I chose to see, the first film I went crazy for, and that's a unique feeling.*

LT: How would you describe your character?

DL: *He's a complicated man, he's a man full of contradictions. He's an intelligence officer, a spy for the rebellion, and spies are weird, you know? They're not allowed to engage emotionally, they're always thinking something else. They're saying one thing but thinking about another. It's interesting to play this role because it's very different from everything I've done and definitely very different from me. I can't stop speaking, and this guy is the opposite. He's quiet, he's all about listening, strategy or what I can get from this, and he's in charge of a very important mission, so there's a heavy weight on his shoulders.*

LT: How do you prepare to play a character like this?

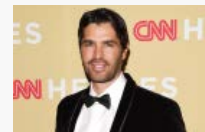
DL: *I spent about two weeks with ex-military men in London, and besides learning how to patrol, how to move, how to lead a squad, it was also a lot of listening to their stories, asking them questions that mattered to me and I needed to understand, like what happens when they capture you, or what happens when they capture someone,*

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all this stuff that my character would know perfectly, that I don't know because to me war is a theme I don't really like getting into. I'm not obsessed with weapons or firing... I kind of hate it. But I do have to say that here it's lasers, it's something I've been playing all my life. I played as a kid, I played with my son and my daughter and now I got to play with the real thing, with the real "toys" in what looked like a theme park to me! The set was spectacular. Every set we went to was spectacular! It was fun, still when I describe it. Also, I'm talking with this much excitement because I've been silent for two years. I was not allowed to share any of this with anyone.

LT: So your family didn't know?

DL: *Well, yeah, with my family I did share it. My son came to set, my daughter came to set...*

LT: How did your family keep it a secret? Because we Latinos tend to be very talkative...

DL: *Yeah, my son and my daughter didn't keep the secret but it's ok, they're kids and I wasn't going to hide it from them. It's the first time that I see that amount of interest in them about my work, so to me it feels great. I'm proud I can share this with them and they're excited. Work has been this horrible thing in our lives that has separated us. But now, my son would be like "go to work, please!" or "go do that film, that's amazing, and make sure you bring some toys back!"*

LT: As a Star Wars fan, how do you suggest to anyone who's never seen any of the movies to watch them? In what order?

DL: *I would say... the first film you have to watch is "Rogue One," and "Rogue One" is going to get you hooked in a way that you have no idea, and then you should see it in the way they were shot.*

LT: So, Episodes IV, V, VI, then I, II, III and Force Awakens?

DL: *Exactly, that's how I would suggest you watch it.*

LT: What was the funniest moment on set that you can remember?

DL: *The fun always came from a guy called Alan Tudyk. He's just an amazing person and also has this very sharp and sarcastic humor that was so needed on set because it was very intense, very demanding and many time there were a lot of tensions and Alan always knew what to say at the right moment and I was so lucky to be able to work with him. K-2 is the best friend Cassian has and that tells you a lot about Cassian also. His best friend is a drone he reprogrammed. It was such a joy and pleasure to see him on set. Every time he walked in, it was like "here he comes! Alan is in the house, perfect! Today is going to be fun!" And there's a lot of waiting on set, but my waiting was fun because he was around.*

LT: How would you want people to react when they see this movie?

DL: *I just hope they love it. We did this film knowing there is a huge amount of audience out there really wanting this film to be great, and I just hope we achieved that.*

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Maria G. Valdez

Born and raised Dominican living in New York (do not confuse with Dominican-York), who claims to be Sofia Vergara's long lost daughter and who has an unhealthy obsession with JLo. Associate Editor of Latin Times, overseeing the editorial operation and content strategy of the website. Trained journalist and musical theater performer with solid entertainment instincts. Experience covering human interest stories and social and large scale events with focus on Latino entertainment. Maria began her career in journalism in her native Dominican Republic where she worked for Ritmo Social, one of the country's most prestigious magazines, and as on-air co-host of a radio variety show.

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