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Secrets of 'Star Wars' spilled in 2-hour show

By MICHAEL GILTZ

STAR Wars" creator George Lucas says he almost landed Steven Spielberg to direct "Return of the Jedi."

That's one of a number of revelations in a new two-hour A&E special, "**Star Wars: Empire of Dreams**," set to air Sunday night at 8 — part of the big run up to the DVD release of one of the most popular trilogies of all time.

The A&E special is, in fact, an edited version of the 156 minute documentary on the "Star Wars Trilogy," due out September 21.

Why didn't the marriage of Spielberg and "Star Wars" ever happen? Seems Lucas' famous fights with the Directors Guild and other Hollywood establishments killed it.

Lucas and countless others — including Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill — are in-

cluded in the program about the travails of making "Star Wars" and its classic sequels, "The Empire Strikes Back" and "The Return of the Jedi."

Among the highlights of the show and the DVD:

■ Hayden Christensen is digitally inserted into the celebratory final scene of "Return of the Jedi," alongside a ghost-like Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda.

■ Numerous tweaks beyond the "special editions"

released in 1997 have been made to clean up the effects, including the first appearance of Jabba the Hutt.

■ Fans speculated Lucas was jealous of "The Lord of the Rings" and so rushed his trilogy out on DVD early. But Peter Jackson appears in the extras, praising the films, talking about how they inspired him and comparing Lucas's creation to that of J.R.R. Tolkien.

The TV special is the latest step in a campaign that is sure to turn the "Star Wars Trilogy" boxed set into one of the best-selling DVDs of all time.

Still, fans have flooded websites with their growing despair that Lucas refuses to release the original version of the three films, rather than the doctored '97 special editions that he has made even further changes to for the DVD.



Vader to haunt "Dreams."