



'Honey, I'm the bad guy!'

"My favourite thing about teaching voice-over is when I hear a real person emerge from behind the mic and when the student is right on the money the first time and they hear it themselves."

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It is difficult to associate the Seneca professor at the head of the class with Albert Wesker, the evil, sadistic creature out to eradicate humanity in the wildly popular video game *Resident Evil*. That is, until Prof. Richard Waugh pulls out his Wesker voice, the deep-throated snarl that sends chills down the spine of his students who grew up fighting the horrors the digital villain visited on humanity.

Mr. Waugh, who has been teaching in the Acting for Camera & Voice diploma program (</programs/fulltime/ACV.html>) for four years, is the most definitive voice of Wesker in Capcom's *Resident Evil* series. Even now, his distinctive style in *Resident Evil — Code: Veronica*, *Resident Evil Zero*, *Resident Evil 4* and *Wesker's Report* is followed by his successors.

"It just happened," he said. "At the time, I didn't even play video games. It was a new industry and I didn't think this was going to be a big deal. It was a side job with some extra money. And then, it became the thing I was known for more than anything else."

As one of Canada's top voice actors, Mr. Waugh is also known for his stage, film and television careers that include performances in *Schitt's Creek*, *Workin' Moms*, *Murdoch Mysteries*, *Designated Survivor*, *American Gothic*, *Saving Hope*, *Street Legal*, *Robocop*, *A Nero Wolfe Mystery*, *F/X: The Series* and the CBC mockumentary *Jimmy MacDonald's Canada — The Lost Episodes*.

It's a career that spans a few decades and Mr. Waugh traces it back to an injury when he was 12 years old and confined to his parents' basement in London, Ont. While he recovered, all he had for entertainment was TVO and CBC on television with a generous viewing of *Doctor Who*, *Universal Monsters*, *Frankenstein* and also Fred Astaire, one of America's most popular dancers. By the time the young Mr. Waugh was back on his feet, all he wanted to do was to be on stage and dance like Mr. Astaire. A few years later, he turned a summer job into an opportunity to launch a children's theatre group in London's Storybook Gardens, a recreation park best known at the time for its petting zoo.



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"I realized I could produce plays using the ventriloquists, jugglers and magicians hired by the public utilities commission to entertain visitors to the park. I'd do auditions and then I'd incorporate that talent into whatever play we were doing. I was 16 and I was an artistic director and I was demanding of my talent! I was also being paid \$265 a week as an actor. I kept that job right up until I was hired by the Shaw Festival Theatre and let me tell you, I did not make more," Mr. Waugh said, laughing.

It was while he was working at the Shaw, which he joined while he was studying theatre at Ryerson University, when Mr. Waugh got his first break on television in the series *Street Legal* and he was instantly in love with television and overcome with awe.

"I was nauseous with nerves," he said. "I knew nothing about how films or TV worked and if someone shouted 'speed' instead of 'action,' I would start acting. But I loved it. I felt complete."

Soon, he was cast in other television productions and each stint came with its own excitement, new opportunities and also some surprises as in the case of the hit TV series *Designated Survivor*, starring Kiefer Sutherland.

"We had already done some filming and then I was told I was going to enjoy the next script. And then I was like: 'Who is this Deep Throat guy, the traitor in the White House? Oh god, it's me!' And then I went home and yelled up to my wife, 'Honey, I'm the bad guy!' I thought I was the good guy in that series," he said.



The best part of his career, Mr. Waugh says, is meeting unbelievably talented, funny or driven people.

"It is a business for people who are willing to muck in with people they've never met," he said. "It's the most extraordinary thing about actors — once you are in a cast, you are a team and you band together and become very close. There's no other business where you can get so close to people so quickly."

Mr. Waugh says he often advises his students that they should not study the arts with the objective of making money, because one can't strive to be rich and famous. All they can try is to be good at their job.

"So strive to be a really good actor at the mic or on stage or camera, I don't care which," he said. "There's value in studying the arts. If I had my way, people would have to do theatre in high school education. It is extremely valuable — it teaches you to work with others, to communicate well, to take a piece of text and break it down in order to know what it really means and what is really being said there. My favourite thing about teaching voice-over is when I hear a real person emerge from behind the mic and when the student is right on the money the first time and they hear it themselves."

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