



From the roof of The Sun HQ: Hugh Jackman takes on a 107-foot abseil for Help for Heroes.

FILM / INTERVIEW

Whatever happened to the heroes?

Kasha Van Sant discovers an American Wolverine in Wapping

Wolverine is an X-man supreme. Considered a hero, but fictitious nonetheless. Until Hugh Jackman came along, clawed out of his yellow spandex suit, settled for a nice biker jacket and decided to fling himself off a building.

The scene is London's press heartland, the day overcast, but the excitement is overflowing. Eager faces peer up at the speck that is Hugh and Sgt. Chris Hunter of the Navy Royal Marines Display Team.

"Personally I kind of love it, so that was probably one of the greatest acting challenges of the movie."

The intrepid Aussie has a reputation for swinging into action to promote his films, having last week arrived at the *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* premiere in Sydney,

perched on the runner of a helicopter no less.

whatever happened to the heroes?

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This leg of the promo, the location may not be as glamorous — tomorrow it's the Eiffel Tower — but the cause shines bright. From the roof of The Sun HQ comes a 107-foot abseil to promote and support Help for Heroes.

The charity has been helping returning servicemen and servicewomen in need of financial aid, and has hit close to home for Hugh whose sister Rowan served in Iraq. "I suspected there were some very tough experiences, but she didn't talk about that a great deal."



Jackman's Wolverine: mythic, metal-clawed, and still given a very human point of weakness.

After some dallying and gear-tinkering, the stage is set and the two specks descend. One in black, the other in khaki. The action is over in the blink of an eye; well almost as the cameras capture their moment.

As I stand watching I nod and recall earlier conversations with Hugh and director Gavin Hook. There is no sign at all of Wolverine's fear of flying.

Hugh explained the depth it adds to his character, "I think ever since I saw Indiana Jones and he was

scared of snakes, it seemed a little abstract. But, I loved that idea of vulnerability of someone who's animalistic like Wolverine and it made sense to me that he would not appreciate being out of control up high in the air."

NOTE

**107
FEET**

THE HEIGHT OF
THE ABSEIL
FROM THE SUN
HQ IN WAPPING.



Sport, dance and stunt choreography combine in Jackman's physical performance.



The claws may be comic-book spectacle, but Jackman looks for the vulnerability underneath.

Good job we have Hugh, not his character with us today. As he floats delicately onto the ground in a much more slender version of himself. He is far from the humongous bulk of his character, but is still characteristically grinning from ear to ear.

"Audiences work out when you are using a double."

Clearly there is a big love of stuntsmanship here. Earlier when asked how much of the stunt work he does, he replied, "a lot of it's me. I have a bit of a sport background, I was never great at it but I enjoyed it."

"I have a little bit of a dance background and to me stunts and fighting, stunt fighting choreography is a mixture of the two, sport and dancing. So, I really enjoy doing that and I think audiences deserve it too."

Quite true. But is there anything that scares him?

The man behind the claws

"I don't know about you, but I grew up with older brothers and sisters so they were always doing things that were above my age and I remember being so upset with myself that I was scared of heights."

"I was so upset with myself so I went down every day to the diving board, at school, and we had a 1, 3 and 10 metre board and I kept jumping off the 3 until I wasn't scared and then I went to the 10 and I did it for about a month just jumping until I was no longer scared and from that moment I kind of loved it."

"Fear seems to creep into every part of your life."

Maybe as an insight, I hate being frightened of things; fear seems to creep into every part of your life so if there's something I identify that's frightening to me, I want to tackle it.

Great philosophy, maybe I will ask Hugh and not Wolverine to hold my hand the next time I have to tackle great heights.

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From clockwise: Wolverine promotional stills, rooftop abseil for Help for Heroes, close-up character imagery.
Interview: Kasha Van Sant