



[LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM] Ray Park finally showed his face to the audience in *Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever*, as Lucy Liu's martial-arts nemesis. In *Sleepy Hollow*, Park's entire head was absent as he portrayed the fighting headless horseman (portrayed in life by the always-chilling Christopher Walken). His role as Toad in *X-Men* almost revealed his face but covered it in sickly makeup and gave him a nasty CGI tongue. Next year, Park turns from villain to hero as Marvel's Iron Fist. Photos courtesy of Internet Movie Database Inc., ©1990–2003.

Park's first speaking part came in 2000, when he landed the role of the near-sighted, far-jumping Toad in *X-Men*, a movie that gave him his own stunt double. "Even though I could have done all the stunts on that movie myself, they have to give you a stunt double for insurance reasons," he explains. "They didn't want me to get hurt, so they wouldn't let me get blown through doors." First he was somewhat taken aback by the separation from his old colleagues, since he likes to get down and dirty. As the shoot went on, however, he came to an important revelation about stunt work: "I don't want to sit in crashing cars or be set on fire. I'll stick to the work in front of the camera, doing the martial arts and the acting."

Last year, Ray Park's untransformed face finally appeared in the movie *Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever*. "My Mom was really happy," he smiles. "Throughout the screening she kept saying, 'There's my boy.'" Park believes his films have a natural progression and have never dealt him more than he could handle. "*Star Wars* and *X-Men* were physical roles that opened more doors for me. But I never went to drama school, so I still have a lot to learn. *Ballistic* was more of recognition for me that people can see and hear me in a movie. Now they finally know what I sound and look like."

Aside from one big showdown fight with Lucy Liu, *Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever* presented Park with few physical challenges. "I was glad," he says of the part. "It establishes my character better than if I had just jumped in and started chopping people up. It was more of an acting part." As for his fight with Lucy Liu, he would have liked to have had more rehearsal time. "She had been preparing herself for a while before I even joined the film. I wished we could have practiced more, but since she had so many fight scenes to rehearse for and I'm an experienced martial artist, we got a bit shortchanged."

Park's biggest acting challenge still lies ahead of him. Ray Park landed his first lead role in another Marvel comic adaptation, *Iron Fist*. "My Dad had heard of this comic,



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