

**Here is the CBS News "60 Minutes" fascinating and fact filled interview with Colin Firth, the Academy Award Best Actor winner who portrayed King George VI in "The King's Speech" and David Seidler, Academy Award Original Screenplay writer of the "The King's Speech". (Note: this interview was held before the Academy Award ceremony on Feb. 27, 2011)**

**From: CBS News "60 Minutes" (Video and Transcript)**

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7357190n&tag=related;photovideo>

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/02/20/60minutes/main20033390.shtml>

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## **The story behind "The King's Speech"**

With 12 Oscar nominations, "The King's Speech" is among the most nominated films of all time. It's based on the true story of George VI, the father of the present queen of England. George VI was a man who, in the 1930s, desperately did not want to be king. He was afflicted nearly all his life by a crippling stammer which stood to rob Britain of a commanding voice at the very moment that Hitler rose to threaten Europe.

"The King's Speech" came, seemingly out of nowhere to become the film to beat on Oscar night. And Colin Firth is now the odds-on favorite to win best actor for his critically acclaimed portrayal of George VI.

The hidden letters behind "The King's Speech"

What's it like to hold history in your hands? Scott Pelley had that chance, reporting on the Oscar-nominated film "The King's Speech." Hear from Colin Firth and Mark Logue, whose grandfather's friendship with a king made history.

Segment: "The King's Speech"

Extra: The real King George

Extra: Colin Firth, King and Queen

Extra: Firth's Oscar-nominated roles

Extra: Firth's "bland" looks

Pictures: Colin Firth on "60 Minutes"

When correspondent Scott Pelley asked Firth if he liked being king, Firth said, "I think it's hard to think of anything worse, really. I mean, I wouldn't change places with this man. And I would be very surprised if anybody watching the film would change places with this man."

"It's a perfect storm of catastrophic misfortunes for a man who does not want the limelight, who does not want to be heard publicly, who does not want to expose this humiliating impediment that he's spent his life battling," Firth explained. "He's actually fighting his own private war. He'd rather have been facing machine gun fire than have to face the microphone."

The microphone hung like a noose for the king, who was a stutterer from the age of 8. He was never meant to be king. But in 1936 his older brother gave up the throne to marry Wallace Simpson, a divorced American. Suddenly George VI and his wife Elizabeth reigned over an empire that was home to 25 percent of the world's population.

And like the George of over 1,000 years before, he had a dragon to slay: radio.

"When I looked at images of him or I listened to him, you do see that physical struggle," Firth said of the king's public speeches. "His eyes close, and you see him try to gather himself. And it's heartbreaking."

Among those listening was a 7-yr.-old British boy who, like the king, had a wealth of words but could not get them out.

"I was a profound stutterer. I started stuttering just before my third birthday. I didn't rid myself of it until I was 16. But my parents would encourage me to listen to the king's speeches during the war. And I thought, 'Wow if he can do that, there is hope for me.' So he became my childhood hero," David Seidler, who wrote the movie, told Pelley.

Seidler had grown up with the story, but he didn't want to tell the tale until he had permission from the late king's widow, known as The Queen Mother.

Seidler had sent a letter to her. "And finally, an answer came and it said, 'Dear Mr. Seidler, please, not during my lifetime the memory of these events is still too painful.' If the Queen Mum says wait to an Englishman, an Englishman waits. But, I didn't think I'd have to wait that long," he explained.

Asked why, Seidler said, "Well, she was a very elderly lady. Twenty five years later, just shy of her 102nd birthday, she finally left this realm."

After the Queen Mother's death in 2002, Seidler went to work. He found the theme of the story in the clash between his royal highness and an Australian commoner who became the king's salvation, an unknown speech therapist named Lionel Logue.

"The words that keep coming up when you hear about Lionel Logue are 'charisma' and 'confidence.' He would never say, 'I can fix your stuttering.' He would say, 'You can get a handle on your stuttering. I know you can succeed,'" Seidler said.

Geoffrey Rush plays Logue, an unorthodox therapist and a royal pain.

They say you can't make this stuff up, and in much of the film that's true. Seidler could not have imagined his work would lead to a discovery that would rewrite history. Researchers for the film tracked down Lionel Logue's grandson Mark, because the movie needed family photos to get the clothing right.

Mark Logue not only had pictures, he also had some diaries.

His grandfather's diaries were up in the attic in boxes that the family had nearly forgotten. When Logue hauled them down for the movie, he discovered more than 100 letters between the therapist and his king.

"My dear Logue, thank you so much for sending me the books for my birthday, which are most acceptable.' That's so British isn't it. 'Yours very sincerely, Albert,'" Logue read from one of the letters.

"As you read through all these letters between your grandfather and the king, what did it tell you about the relationship between these two men?" Pelley asked.

"It's not the relationship between a doctor and his patient, it's a relationship between friends," Logue said.

We met Logue at the same address where his grandfather treated the king. And among the hundreds of pages of documents were Logue's first observations of George VI.

"Probably the most startling thing was the king's appointment card," Logue told Pelley. "It described in detail the king's stammer, which we hadn't seen anywhere else. And it also described in detail the intensity with the appointments."

The king saw Lionel Logue every day for an hour, including weekends.

"You know, he was so committed. I think he decided 'This is it. I have to overcome this stammer, and this is my chance,'" Mark Logue told Pelley.

In the film, the king throws himself into crazy therapies. But in truth, Logue didn't record his methods. The scenes are based on Seidler's experience and ideas of the actors.

"We threw in stuff that we knew. I mean, somebody had told me that the only way to release that muscle," actor Geoffrey Rush said of one of the speech exercises he did in the movie. "And of

course, little did I realize that the particular lens they were using on that shot made me look like a Galapagos tortoise."

While the treatments spring from imagination, the actors read Logue's diaries and letters to bring realism to everything else.

"The line at the end, I found reading the diaries in bed one night, 'cause this is what I used to do every night, when Logue says 'You still stammered on the 'W'," Firth said.

The line was used in the movie.

"It shows that these men had a sense of humor. It showed that there was wit. It showed there was self mockery and it just showed a kind of buoyancy of spirit between them. The fact that he spoke on a desk standing upright in this little hidden room is something we found in the diaries as well," Firth told Pelley.

"In reality he had to stand up to speak, he had to have the window open," Firth said. "And he had to have his jacket off."

"And that wonderful, specific little eccentric observation that came from reality," Firth added.

One of the most remarkable things to come out of the Logue attic was a copy of what maybe the most important speech the king ever made - the speech that gave the movie its name. This was the moment when King George VI had to tell his people that for the second time in a generation they were at war with Germany. The stakes were enormous. The leader of the empire could not stumble over these words.

Mark Logue has the original copy of "the speech," typed out on Buckingham Palace stationary.

"What are all of these marks? All these vertical lines? What do they mean?" Pelley asked, looking over the documents.

"They're deliberate pauses so that the king would be able to sort of attack the next word without hesitation," Logue said. "He's replacing some words, he's crossing them out and suggesting another word that the King would find easier to pronounce."

"Here's a line that he's changed, 'We've tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between my government.' He's changed that from, 'my government,' to, 'the differences between ourselves and those who would be our enemies,'" Pelley said.

"You know, I'm curious. Have either of you snuck into a theater and watched the film with a regular audience?" Pelley asked Firth and Rush.

"No, the only time I've ever snuck in to watch my own film I got quite nervous about it, because I just thought it be embarrassing to be seen doing that, so I pulled my collar up, and the hat down, over my eyes, and you know, snuck in as if I was going into a porn cinema, or something and went up the stairs, crept in, sidled in, to sit at the back, and I was the only person in the cinema. That's how well the film was doing," Firth remembered.

Now, it's a lot harder for Firth to go unnoticed. Recently he was immortalized with a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame and brought along his Italian wife Livia.

They've been married 14 years and have two sons. With "The King's Speech," we realized Firth is one of the most familiar actors that we know almost nothing about. So we took him back to his home town Alresford in Hampshire, outside London. He's the son of college professors, but Firth dropped out of high school to go to acting school.

"But you don't have a Hampshire accent," Pelley pointed out.

"No. My accent has changed over the years, as a matter of survival. So until I was about 10, I used to talk like that," Firth replied, mimicking the local accent. "I remember it might have been on this street, actually, where I think the conversation went something like, 'Oy, you want to fight?' And I said, 'No, I don't.' 'Why not?' 'Well, 'cause you'll win.' 'No, I won't.' 'Well, will I win then?' 'Well, you might not.' And so, you know, we went trying to process the logic. And I thought, 'Have we dealt with it now?'"

"Do we still have to fight?" Pelley asked.

"Do we actually have to do the practical now? We've done the theory," Firth replied.

He wanted us to see his first stage. It turned out to be the yard of his elementary school where he told stories from his own imagination.

"And at lunch times on the field up here, the crowd would gather and demand the story. They'd all sit 'round and say, 'No, we want the next bit,'" Firth remembered.

Firth told Pelley he found his calling for acting at the age of 14.

Asked what happened then, he told Pelley, "I used to go to drama classes up the road here on Saturday mornings. And one day I just had this epiphany. It was I can do this. I want to do this."

He has done 42 films in 26 years, most of them the polar opposite of "The King's Speech," like "Mamma Mia!"

"How hard was it to get you to do the scene for the closing credits?" Pelley asked, referring to Firth doing a musical number in an outrageous, Abba-inspired outfit.

"I think that's the reason I did the film," Firth joked.

"You have no shame?" Pelley asked.

"I'm sorry. That's if one thing has come out of '60 Minutes' here, it's we have discovered, we've unveiled the fact that Colin Firth has no shame. I am such a drag queen. It's one of my primary driving forces in life. If you cannot dangle a spandex suit and a little bit of mascara in front of me and not just have me go weak at the knees," Firth joked.

From queen to king, Firth is an actor of amazing range who now has his best shot at this first Oscar.

Like George VI himself, this movie wasn't meant to be king. "The King's Speech" was made for under \$15 million. But now the movie, the director, the screenwriter David Seidler, who made it happen, and all the principal actors are in the running for Academy Awards. It would be Geoffrey Rush's second Oscar.

"What advice to you have for this man who may very likely win the Oscar this year?" Pelley asked Rush.

"Well enjoy it. It isn't the end of anything because you will go on and do a couple more flops probably, you might even sneak into another film in which no one is in the house," Rush joked. But on Oscar night, stammering King George may have the last word. A lot of movies are based on true stories. But "The King's Speech" has reclaimed history.

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**Listen to the actual speech delivered by King George VI in 1939 at:**

<http://www.awesomestories.com/assets/george-vi-sep-3-1939>

**Additional information can be viewed at the official site of The King's Speech:**

<http://www.kingsspeech.com/index.html> (English)

<http://kingsspeech.gaga.ne.jp/> (Japanese)