

“The Star Wars Kid”

- Will Wei

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Ghyslain Raza was one of the first well-known victims of cyberbullying. More commonly known as the "Star Wars Kid," Raza was humiliated and embarrassed by students who attended his high school – Séminaire St-Joseph – a private institution in Quebec. Several students created a viral video that spread from the school to the web, which meant the entire world could watch it.



In November 2002, 15-year old Ghyslain Raza set up a camcorder to tape himself for a class project. In the video, Raza is mimicking Darth Maul from Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace as he swings around a golf ball retriever like a dual lightsaber.

The tape was left with the school's filming equipment and would be discovered by classmates Jérôme Laflamme and Jean-Michel Rheault, who imported the tape onto a computer. The video would soon find its way into emails and was distributed amongst the students at Séminaire St-Joseph. One of those students, Michaël Caron, took the video and posted it on a website for the world to see.

And that's just the beginning of the "Star Wars Kid" saga. What happened afterwards wasn't so pretty. Ghyslain Raza dropped out of school, was diagnosed with depression, and finished the year at a psychiatric ward for children. Ghyslain and his parents sued the families of the three students in July 2003 for around \$250,000 USD.

A statement from the lawsuit: "Ghyslain had to endure, and still endures today, harassment and derision from his high-school mates and the public at large."

In April 2006, Ghyslain Raza and his family would reach a settlement with the three students' families. Now in his early 20s, Ghyslain Raza has certainly become more than just the "Star Wars Kid." He is getting his law degree at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and back in his hometown, Ghyslain Raza is President of the "Patrimoine Trois-Rivières" – a conservation society aiming to preserve the cultural heritage of the town of Trois-Rivières.



Combined stats from The Viral Factory and TubeMogul show that 15-year old Ghyslain Raza has been viewed well over 1 billion times since its first upload, making it the most watched video ever.

Whether or not the video still affects him, the young president has made a name for himself outside of the viral video world.