

ROWLING NEVER WANTS TO BE A SCENE STEALER

Harry Potter creator JK Rowling has revealed she is so camera-shy she'd only make a cameo in a TV adaptation of her work if she was in full prosthetics.

The 55-year-old, who lives in Edinburgh, said she would "ruin the scene" if she appeared on screen.

The author added she was so scared of being recognised she wore a disguise to buy her wedding

George Mair

dress. Rowling made the revelations yesterday in a series of true or false questions posed by BBC Radio 2's Graham Norton.

She said she had turned down a chance to write a Doctor Who episode as she was too busy writing, and unwinds by playing computer game Mario Kart.

Asked if it was true that she made a cameo appearance in the most

recent Cormoran Strike BBC TV series, Lethal White, she said: "I was there for some of the filming so I'm just off camera. I never make cameo appearances. That would be a terrible thing. I'd ruin the scene. I'm very self-conscious, it wouldn't work."

Asked if she was tempted to appear in a crowd scene in the final Harry Potter film, she said: "The only way I'd do it is if I had a lot of prosthetics on."



SHY WRITER Rowling

COMMANDER HAILS SERVICE

FOR SUPPORT AS HE GIVES BACK TO COMMUNITY



PROUD Firefighter Paul with his sons Paul Jr and Kieran

“Being a firefighter allowed me to be there to support my boys and give them a good life”

Heather Greenaway
He is used to going into burning buildings and saving lives but firefighter Paul Blackwood said the job saved him from himself.

After losing his mum to breast cancer when he was just seven years old, Paul's life spiralled out of control. He was excluded from primary school and, by the age of 12, the authorities were threatening to take him into care.

In the years that followed, Paul, from Glasgow's Govanhill, went completely off the rails - losing friends to drugs and at one point ending up in a homeless hostel.

Married at 19, he later became a single dad and turned his life around to pursue his dream of being a firefighter.

Now a Group Commander, he's part of a mentoring programme for teenagers to help them overcome challenges and fulfil their ambitions.

Paul, 49, said: "The day I became a firefighter was one of the proudest moments of my life. I have made poor choices in my life but joining the Fire Service was definitely one of the best."

"The day I became a dad, I knew I had to turn my life around so I could provide for my sons and give them a future."

"I grew up not far from the station in Govanhill and had wanted to be a firefighter from the minute I saw an engine roaring up Alison Street."

"Life and bad decisions during my childhood and teenage years got in the way of my dream for a while but I found my way back. I'm now proud to be able to use my past experiences to mentor young people

I had been fighting my demons for years.. but fighting fires saved me

Boss on turning life around

who find themselves on the wrong path, like I did, and show them you can change and there is hope."

Paul, who oversees nine stations in Ayrshire, admits it was the death of his mum that triggered his bad behaviour. The former Holyrood High School pupil said: "I was a product of my environment. I grew up the youngest of six and my mum Helen died of breast cancer aged 42, when I was just seven years old."

"It was after she passed that I started to get into trouble. Looking back on it, I realise I was grieving but did not know how to express it. I started getting into fights at primary school and was excluded

three times. I was constantly in trouble, so much so that when I was 12 the Children's Panel told my dad I could be placed in care."

"My dad fought the case and tried to steer me on to the right path but he was on his own raising six kids and needed to work and, when he was out, I would run wild."

Paul, who lives with his second wife Trish, 51, in Giffnock, added: "The older I got, the more of a tearaway I became and, although I loved high school, I got excluded on twice. As a teenager, there were times when I went completely off the rails and at one point I

ADVICE Paul now mentors teens to help them fulfil their goals

lost two close friends to drugs, which was very tough.

"I also married at a young age, 19, and had my two boys - but the marriage didn't last and at one point I ended up in a homeless hostel."

"When the boys were nine and 12, I found myself as a single father with no real qualifications or skills."

Despite being turned down in the past, Paul kept reapplying to the Fire Service and, after 10 years, he was finally accepted - becoming a whole-time (based at station rather than being on call) firefighter on March 3, 1999, at the age of 27.

He managed to juggle his job and be a full-time dad to Paul Jr, now 30, and Kieran, 28.

He said: "In the Fire Service, you have great people around you who are willing to support you - from managers down to your colleagues. They all gave me the support wherever possible to balance my shifts with looking after my boys."

"My dad was my rock after mum died and being a firefighter allowed me to be there to support my boys and give them a good start in life."

"My eldest son Paul became a firefighter two years ago after serving in Afghanistan as a British Army sniper and Kieran is a gas engineer with his own firm. I could not be prouder of them."

Paul, who gained a degree after joining the Fire Service, now helps young people through the MCR Pathways mentoring programme.

He said: "What we say to them is what you are experiencing now is not you for the rest of your life - you have options. Joining the service is one of those options."

The service's recruitment campaign - We Are SFRS... You Are SFRS - aims to attract more applications from women, ethnic minorities and the LGBTQ+ community. Director Liz Barnes said: "We pride ourselves on working at the heart of communities to keep people safe so it's imperative we reflect the diversity of those communities."

Paul added: "Look at what the service did for me - it was a life-changer."

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