

GAME OF THRONES

CASTS CALGARY WOLF WITH JON SNOW



Photo Courtesy Andrew Simpson

Famed movie animal trainer Andrew Simpson recently assisted with a shoot for the popular HBO series Game of Thrones and one of his wolves, Quigley, seen right, will star in an episode of the show due to air May 24.

He's trained and cared for just outside of Calgary, but soon Quigley will star as the big wolf in Westeros.

The four-legged lupine, one of 30 belonging to area resident Andrew Simpson, is featured in a few scenes on the wildly popular HBO show **Game of Thrones**.

Simpson, through his company **Instinct Animals For Film**, has been training wolves and other animals for big-time Hollywood shoots for more than two decades. He's been involved in projects like the movie **Elf, Borat** and the **Final Destination** series, but conceded being part of HBO's popular fantasy drama may be a credit that tops them all.

Quigley stars in the show as *Ghost*, the direwolf belonging to fan favourite underdog Jon Snow. He actually appeared briefly in the already-aired season five premiere, but there are scenes in the soon-to-air seventh episode where he really struts his stuff, Simpson said.

"In the first one (episode), he was in a courtyard with Jon Snow," Simpson recalled. "In the seventh one, he was doing a lot of snarling and attack stuff."

Simpson said the show's creators have actually been reaching out to him to be involved since the show began, but he spent the last three years shooting a massive project in China called **Wolf Totem**. At one

point, when the direwolves were a bigger part of the plot, **Game of Thrones'** producers attempted to bring him and his pack to Ireland.

Finally, this time around, they decided to come all the way to Calgary and filmed the scenes quietly in a city studio this past January.

Simpson says his prized pups and others in the species are greatly misunderstood and attempted to set the record straight with a 2011 documentary called **Wolves Unleashed** that starred his furry family.

The film took viewers behind the scenes of a frigid shoot in Siberia for the French film **Loup**.

Simpson said, beyond that, bringing high-profile productions like Game of Thrones to Alberta only helps to bolster the local film scene.

"They were extremely happy with everything they got and hopefully they'll be back next year," he said of the show's crew.

Simpson's wolves also recently were involved in shooting some scenes for the Leonard DiCaprio-starring film **The Revenant**, which is being shot locally.