

Acting in the extreme

Erich Redman tells Kate Everett about acting in *United 93*

HERTFORDSHIRE-based actor Erich Redman portrays the German passenger Christian Adams in the blockbuster film *United 93*, which tells the story of the events of 9/11. Although he has a German-Russian background, Erich has been based in the UK for some years.

His impressive list of credits includes a diverse range of roles in movies including *Saving Private Ryan* and *Charlotte Gray* and British TV classics such as *Lovejoy* and *The Knock*.

His work has included appearances alongside stars such as Tom Hanks, Sandra Bullock and Matt Damon and he has worked with award-winning directors Steven Spielberg and Sir Richard Attenborough.

His latest role in the controversial *United 93* proved a challenging but exciting opportunity. 'Many people felt it was too soon to depict the events of 9/11 in a film, to the point where some American theatres actually pulled the trailer. When the film came out it was to universal positive reviews and the public had the opportunity to watch it and see how tastefully the story had been told.'

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'We had no script as such; the story was built on the facts we knew from transcripts and telephone calls from the passengers. Each actor also learned as much as they could from talking to their character's family, from photographs, video tapes or written accounts and this inspired their portrayal.

'My character was an introverted, sensitive guy, who would have remembered the Mogadishu hijacking of 1977 and probably believed that there would be a peaceful outcome. In the film,





Opposite Erich Redman Above Images from *United 93*

he urges his fellow passengers to go along with the hijackers demands, not realising that they never had any intention of landing the plane safely.' Director Paul Greengrass, who includes *Bloody Sunday* and *Bourne Supremacy* among his credits, wanted to capture authenticity and raw emotion from his cast and used an unusual filming technique. The actual hijack scene is incredibly emotive to watch, and was shot in real time during gruelling 40-minute takes, when a real-size American Airlines plane would simulate real dives and banking, resulting in numerous cuts and bruises among the cast. As Erich explains, the filming was incredibly intense: 'Filming *United 93* was a unique acting experience for me, and far more serious and intense than most of the projects I have worked on. Events were filmed chronologically without

dialogue and much of the action you see is actually happening to the actors. There was a great deal of improvisation involved, and quite a few minor injuries, but it helped us to recreate the trauma of the passengers. 'The opportunity to be involved in *United 93* was incredibly exciting from an acting perspective, but it has made me think about working to promote peace, perhaps representing a charity at some point in the future. 'In the meantime, I have been working hard on two upcoming films. The first is *The Illusionist*, a supernatural romantic drama starring Edward Norton and Rufus Sewell. The other is *The Flying Dutchman*, which is the fascinating story of the cyclist and innovator Brian Aubrey, starring Jonny Lee Miller, Brian Cox and Steven Berkoff. I am also working on a documentary for the BBC about the

Battle of the Somme.' With such a busy schedule, Erich likes to make the most of his time at home and loves living in Hertfordshire: 'My work takes me all over the world, so I moved out of London to Abbots Langley five years ago. I fell in love with the area for the simplicity of the peaceful environment, the fresh air and because I could actually see the sky here. I have to travel to London often, but I love to come home and spend time enjoying the local area.'

Online information

For more information on *United 93* visit www.united93movie.com

To find out more about Erich Redman, visit his website on www.erichredman.com