

Critics applaud movie, but some say too soon

# Actor takes off in controversial role

by Abena Bailey

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CRYING after takes on the set and feeling low – Abbots Langley resident Erich Redman tells us about acting in the most controversial film of the year.

Cinema-goers will be able to see Mr Redman play one of the main parts in *United 93*, which depicts the events of Flight 93 during the 9/11 tragedy.

Four American passenger planes were hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists. Two of the planes were crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, one was steered into the Pentagon, and the fourth one – United Airline flight 93 – crashed into a field in Pennsylvania.

33 passengers, among them the German Wine Institute representative Christian

Sunday and that wasn't tasteless. *United 93* is very dignified."

The film is as close to reality as possible; the CIA gave the production team transcripts of all the phonecalls made on the flight which included passengers talking to loved ones and calls to police on the ground. The actors used the very same lines on the transcript.

It was shot in Pinewood Studios, Buckinghamshire, without a conventional screenplay. Using a treatment, a series of intense rehearsals and the technique of improvisation instead, director, Paul Greengrass, captured authenticity and raw emotion from the cast.

The actors playing the hijackers and the actors playing the passengers were purposefully kept away from each other until the filming so they

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Adams, seven crew and four hijackers died.

German born Erich Redman, whose credits include Saving Private Ryan, U-571 and Lovejoy, portrays German passenger Christian Adams in the UK/US film.

The Abbots Langley resident moved from Kilburn, London, in 2001 to avoid city life.

Originally trained in business, Mr Redman got the acting bug after a friend encouraged him to attend improvisation classes. After that he put his business career to one side to try out acting.

He moved to England with his girlfriend 15 years ago to pursue his acting career.

A casting agency approached him to audition for United 93 and he was given the part on the spot.

Before United 93 came out many Americans, especially New Yorkers, complained about it being made too soon, but since its release on June 2 the movie has had rave reviews.

Mr Redman said: "I was concerned that maybe it was too soon to make a film about a tragedy so fresh in people's minds. In New York a couple of cinemas pulled the trailers because people in the audience didn't like it and would shout, 'too soon', when they came on. There's a lot of controversy about it, but on the other hand I thought, Paul Greengrass (writer, director and producer), did Bloody

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were actually wary of each other.

The hijack scene was shot in real time and took an exhausting 14 takes, during which a real size United Airlines plane simulated dives and banking resulting in numerous cuts and bruises among the cast.

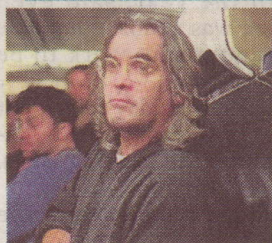
Mr Redman said: "It was pretty

traumatic. Normally in-between takes actors go back to their trailers for a laugh and a joke but not in this film. It was like being at a mass funeral, all the actresses were in tears after each take and some of the male actors too. It was a very sombre atmosphere."

It was not an easy film to make and there was no socialising afterwards because people were not in the mood and felt guilty, but Mr Redman said as a method actor he needed to feel the emotions of his character.

While most of the other male passengers gear up to attack the four Arab hijackers, Mr Redman's character urges his fellow passengers to comply with them, arguing that was historically the best strategy for survival.

"He's the voice of reason," he explained. "Personally I tend to avoid confrontation. In that position I would have kept myself quiet for a while and been careful not provoke the hijackers, but we have survival instinct in us all and if I had the choice to attack or die I would have joined the others in attack."



**SOMBRE MOVIE**  
- Actor Erich Redman in a scene from the movie United 93. Inset: A computer screen showing a flight path. Far left - Director Paul Greengrass on the set. Above - Passengers in the plane. Below: Flight 93 at Newark Airport.