

Cuba

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your deal here?" Truthfully, I think it's playing real-life people that I'm attracted to. And the majority of them have been military men. But there's also James Robert "Radio" Kennedy and some other guys I've played who are real-life people. I think there's something about the heightened responsibility to tell the truth that attracts me to these roles, especially when you can have them on the set to help you do your job. And now that I have two sons who are 15 and 17 who love watching movies, you can count me in whenever I have an opportunity to do a movie that gives a history lesson about our contributions, especially to the military. I'm in! I'm involved!

KW: Editor/legist Patricia Turnier asks: How would you describe your character, Major Emanuelle Stance?

CG: Major Emanuelle Stance is the patriarch on the base. He's like the football coach. He's the person that gives the men their encouragement before they go back out onto the field.



KW: Teresa Emerson asks: What was it like to meet the surviving Tuskegee Airmen? Did they help you prepare for your role as Major Stance?

CG: Every day, literally! They helped me to prepare to be a man. And not only were they on the set every day, but one or two have attended each of the screenings on the junket from Dallas to Miami. And they're in their 90s! It's been a magical and emotional experience for me every, single time. So, it's

been great! [Chuckles]

KW: Attorney Bernadette Beekman says: You've played a lot of heroes. Who is your own personal hero?

CG: My mom, to do what she's done to hold the family together. She raised me, my brother, Omar, and my sister, with all of us being homeless and having to live in the back of a car for a period of time. So, yeah, my mom's my hero. If I had to pick one from the screen, it might be U.S. Navy Master Chief Carl Brashear.

KW: Film student Jamaal Green asks: Cuba, is there any material or genre out there that you have not yet covered in your career that you would like to try?

CG: Absolutely! I just heard about this magician named Black Herman who was a contemporary of Houdini back in the early 20th Century. Also, I'm an avid hockey fan and I've been playing for about 17 years, and somebody recently told me that the first organized hockey teams in Canada were all black. Telling those stories would be cool.

KW: Harriet Pakula Teweles asks: How do you expect the picture to contribute to the public's rethinking of the historic role of the Tuskegee airmen?

CG: I hope the picture makes an impact, and I know George Lucas is doing everything he can to make sure that happens. And then there's the documentary Double Victory I mentioned which is serving as a tangent to the movie. That will be more of a history lesson than Red Tails which is an action adventure tale on the scale of Avatar, with 16,000 special effects. It's something that I think people are going to be really impressed with, visually.

KW: Harriet also asks: What did you learn about yourself doing your role in Red Tails?

CG: I learned that not only am I a descendant of slaves, but that I am also a descendant of royalty, that there are politicians from the 1800s as well as Tuskegee Airmen in my lineage.

KW: Rudy Lewis asks: How inspirational can Red Tails be to those who are not being educated in the skills necessary to compete nationally and globally with young men of their generation? Will Red Tails be relevant to those 50 percent of young black men who drop out of high school yearly?

CG: I hope so. If some youngsters are inspired to go back and complete their education based on the achievements of these warriors, that would be God's gift.

KW: Patricia Turnier also says: One of my favorite roles you played in your career is Dr. Ben Carson. What did it mean to you to represent this great physician who became the first African-American medical doctor in history to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom?

CG: [Shouts] You see! I forgot about that one while we were just focusing on military men. It's my passion to play all these types of characters that help educate how great it is to be not just African-American, but American.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

CG: Yes, sir. Every day.

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

CG: Yes, from time to time, but God has blessed me with the ability to be more happy than fearful.

KW: When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

CG: Accomplishment. I'm 44. I made it. [Laughs]

KW: The Ling-Ju Yen question: What is your earliest childhood memory?

CG: Watching it snow in the Bronx.

KW: If you could have one wish instantly granted, what would that be for?

CG: Longevity.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

CG: Top Ramen. [Laughs]

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

CG: Adrenaline.

KW: Thanks again for the time, Cuba, and best of luck with both Red Tails and Double Victory.

CG: Nice talking with you, Kam.

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