

movie review

Denzel Washington's strong work lifts 'Flight'

BY JAY BOBBIN

If you're about to travel on an airplane, this might not be the time to see "Flight."

That's not because the 2012 drama – which EPIX presents Monday, Jan. 17 and Tuesday, Jan. 18 – isn't a good movie. It's extremely good indeed, but early on, it presents a crisis-in-flight scene that will stand your hair on end. That's no surprise, since "Flight" is directed by someone who had done such a scene before with great and terrifying skill: Robert Zemeckis, who put Tom Hanks through a similar emergency with the crash that set "Cast Away" in motion.

That's just the beginning of "Flight," which primarily is a character study that gives Denzel Washington a crack at a somewhat different kind of role. He surely has played flawed people, but here, he tries to conceal the flaws as the pilot who becomes a media hero after maneuvering his passenger jet out of seemingly certain doom during a fierce storm.

Not all such heroes necessarily want to be that widely praised and looked at; even Capt. "Sully" Sullenberger seemed a bit uncomfortable with all the justified praise after his "miracle landing" in New York. But Washington's character, the charismatic and somewhat arrogant "Whip" Whitaker, has another reason for not wanting the spotlight shining so brightly on him. He had drugs and liquor in his system when he performed his heroics.

As many people as he saves in the near-disaster, he can't save everyone, and the National Transportation Safety Board comes calling to start the preliminaries of an investigation. This is where a story such as "Flight" takes a star as skilled as Washington. Once the scary special effects and aerobatics that set the tale in motion are over, the movie needs somewhere to go, and Washington steers it there most ably.

That being said, the show isn't his alone. Strong impressions also are made by Don Cheadle as the attorney who tries to help Whitaker through the inquiry, and the ever-welcome John Goodman as a cheery supplier of chemicals the pilot should not be indulging in ... especially pre-flight. Kelly Reilly (lately of the series "Yellowstone") also makes her mark as another addict, and Bruce Greenwood ("The Resident") is typically solid as a Whitaker friend who's also a liaison between the pilots' union and the NTSB.

Ultimately and expectedly, though, "Flight" really does take off on the strength of Washington. That's often a quiet strength, a firm indication of why the star in charge here remains one of today's best and most compelling performers.



Denzel Washington in "Flight"

WORD SEARCH

Solution on page 18

In the grid below, twenty answers can be found that fit the category for today. Circle each answer that you find and list it in the space provided at the right of the grid. Answers can be found in all directions—forward, backward, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. An example is given to get you started. Can you find the twenty answers in today's puzzle?

Today's Category: Things to Wear

S	P	A	N	T	I	E	S	K	B	O	J	1.	Pants
V	H	C	C	X	S	R	D	S	R	P	U	2.	
E	S	O	K	C	E	H	H	H	A	D	M	3.	
S	C	B	R	S	H	D	I	J	K	H	P	4.	
T	A	L	U	T	R	H	A	R	H	S	E	5.	
R	K	O	X	E	S	M	C	S	T	K	R	6.	
E	R	U	S	D	A	E	K	D	S	I	O	7.	
T	A	S	U	S	J	C	A	G	C	R	B	8.	
A	P	E	I	C	O	J	S	K	G	T	E	9.	
E	X	D	T	S	L	L	A	R	E	V	O	10.	
W	P	A	N	T	S	T	A	O	C	R	S	11.	
S	E	Z	B	I	X	J	E	R	S	E	Y	12.	
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