

Interview: Robert Zemeckis Red Carpet at Chicago International Film Festival Premiere of ‘Flight’

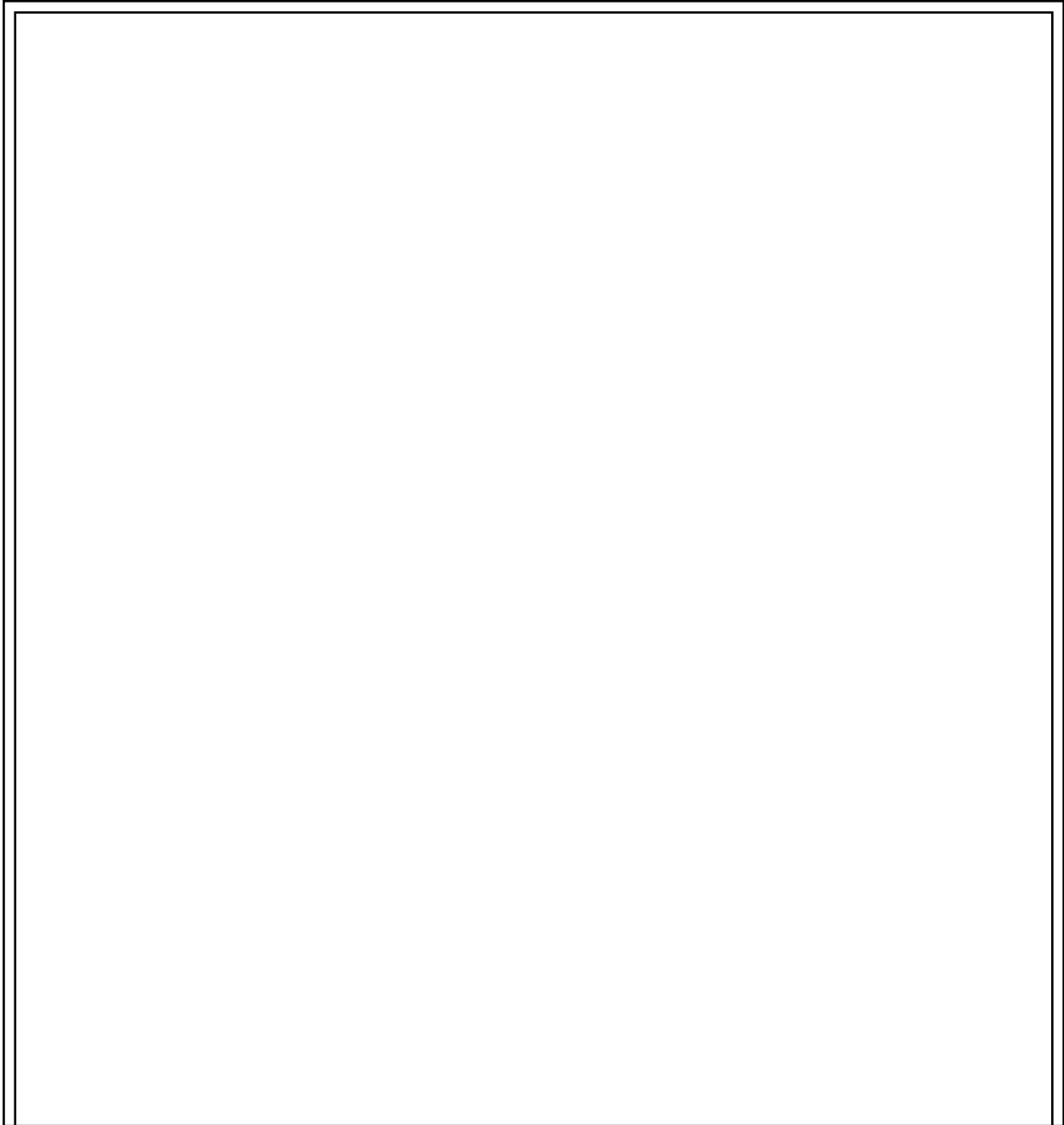
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- [2012](#) [2]
- [48th](#) [3]
- [Back to the Future](#) [4]
- [Cast Away](#) [5]
- [Chicago International Film Festival](#) [6]
- [Denzel Washington](#) [7]
- [Flight](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Interview](#) [10]
- [Joe Arce](#) [11]
- [Patrick McDonald](#) [12]
- [Polar Express](#) [13]
- [Robert Zemeckis](#) [14]
- [Used Cars](#) [15]
- [Who Framed Roger Rabbit?](#) [16]

CHICAGO – One of the great American directors of audience favorite movies is Chicagoan Robert Zemeckis. Known primarily for his “Back to the Future” trilogy, Zemeckis has broken new ground with his recent motion capture animated films “Polar Express,” “Beowulf” and “A Christmas Carol.” His new film “Flight” premiered on the Closing Night of the Chicago International Film Festival on October 25th, 2012.

“Flight” features Denzel Washington in a career expanding performance as Whip Whitaker, a pilot whose one-in-a-million maneuvers lands a doomed passenger airliner. The subsequent investigation of the crash reveals some unsavory elements of Whitaker’s life, and his path through that exposure will determine the next phase of his life. “Flight” is an American story, much like the previous films of Robert Zemeckis’s long career. “Flight” also received the Founder’s Award at the Chicago International Film Festival, as the film that best captures the spirit of the festival, “for its unique and innovative approach to the art of the moving image.”

Zemeckis was born in Chicago, and lived on the south side. His working class family was not the typical background of a burgeoning film career, but Zemeckis was an avid TV watcher and film admirer. He was accepted to the USC School of Cinematic Arts in the early 1970s, and met his eventual writing partner Bob Gale there. His mentor in the business was none other than Steven Spielberg, who admired a student film that he had done. His first two major releases (co-written with Gale) was The Beatles influenced “I Wanna Hold Your Hand” (1978) and the cult classic “Used Cars” (1980).





Robert Zemeckis at the Chicago International Film Festival, Oct. 25th, 2012

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

It was the "Back to the Future" series of films (1985-90) that put Zemeckis on the map, and that was followed by huge hits like "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (1988), "Forrest Gump" (1994), "Cast Away" (2000), "The Polar Express" (2004) and "A Christmas Carol" (2009). HollywoodChicago had three questions for Robert Zemeckis on the Red Carpet right before the Chicago International Film Festival Premiere of "Flight," and photographer Joe Arce got the Exclusive Portrait.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the most satisfying part of your career right now, is it your ability to take your time and produce quality films like "Flight" or just the power to do whatever type of film you want?

Robert Zemeckis: The joy for me comes by adapting screenplays and producing movies that ultimately work as entertainment. I don't have any agenda other than that.

HollywoodChicago.com: 'Flight' is a very vulnerable film. What fascinates you about the human condition and our need to self medicate, even as overindulgence can force a person off the rails? Why does it become difficult, in your opinion, to cope with reality?

Zemeckis: I don't know the real answer for that, but I am fascinated by it. I think what is real is that the need for it is inborn, humans have an inborn necessity to alter their waking consciousness. Even little kids will spin around until they get dizzy, it's just something that is in our nature for some reason.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, if you had that time-traveling DeLorean from 'Back to the Future.' what year would you set it towards, and how would you try to change history once you got there?

Zemeckis: [Laughs] Oh man, I don't know. I would caution that since I know too much about time travel, I know if you try to change history you will change the fabric of the space/time continuum, so you have to be very careful.

VISIT HOLLYWOODCHICAGO.COM LATER THIS WEEK FOR A FULL INTERVIEW OF ROBERT ZEMECKIS BY BRIAN TALLERICO.

“Flight” opens everywhere on November 2nd. Featuring Denzel Washington and directed by Robert Zemeckis. Cinema/Chicago represents the Chicago International Film Festival throughout the year, click on CinemaChicago.org [17] for membership information and other film related activities.



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- [3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/48th>
- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/back-to-the-future>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/cast-away>
- [6] http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/chicago_international_film_festival.html
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/denzel-washington>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/flight>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/labels/interview.html>
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- [13] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/polar-express>
- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/robert-zemeckis>
- [15] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/used-cars>
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