

WAR OF THE WORLDS™

PHILIP AKIN as Norton Drake

Biography

A Canadian citizen born in Kingston, Jamaica, Philip Akin brings the flavor of his native country to his role as Jamaican-born computer expert Norton Drake on WAR OF THE WORLDS, the science-fiction adventure series distributed by Paramount Domestic Television.

The middle brother in a family of five sons, Akin spent the first years of his childhood in Jamaica before returning to Canada with his family. He grew up in a city outside Toronto called Oshawa and, following high school, attended the Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto. A few short days after leaving theatre school, Akin landed his first professional role -- in a production of "Caesar and Cleopatra" at the Shaw Festival.

Armed with his newly earned guild card, Akin went to work, amassing an impressive number of stage credits, including roles in the acclaimed plays "Slow Dance on the Killing Ground," "Streamers" and "The Colored Museum." Possessing an ability to glide comfortably between different cultures, Akin found work both in Canada and the United States, appearing in the films "Iceman" and "Switching Channels" and on series including "Adderly" and seven episodes of "Night Heat." Most recently, he completed a role in the upcoming feature film "Millenium," starring Kris Kristofferson.

The role of Norton Drake called for special preparation by Akin. The character is confined to a wheelchair -- albeit a high-tech, voice-controlled wheelchair named "Gertrude." Akin took special pains to make his portrayal as detailed and realistic as possible, both from his own psychological standpoint and from an outsider's view. "For example," Akin says, "the wardrobe department

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had given me a really nice pair of loafers to wear. But if you think about it, you really can't put on a pair of loafers [if you are handicapped], because you can't move your heel the right way to get into them. I suggested shoes with velcro straps. They make more sense."

Working in a motorized wheelchair operated by an off-camera technician does have its advantages, though. "It's what I call the ideal part for an actor -- a leading role in a series and I never have to hit my mark." Akin laughs, "It's heaven!"

Norton Drake's endearing quirks will be explored as the series continues. One of his trademarks will be his rotating collection of unusual printed T-shirts, including one with the solar system silk-screened in day-glo paint. Norton also professes a fondness for chili.

A long-time student of martial arts, Akin holds a second-degree black belt in aikido. Married with a baby daughter, he lives in Toronto and often makes the 35-minute trip from his home to the studio by bicycle.

WAR OF THE WORLDS is produced by Triumph Entertainment Corporation of Canada in association with Ten-Four Productions and is distributed by Paramount Domestic Television.

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PRESS CONTACTS:

Amy Bertram
Director, Publicity
PARAMOUNT DOMESTIC
TELEVISION
(213) 468-5995

Maggie Begley
MAHONEY/WASSERMAN
PUBLIC RELATIONS
(213) 550-3922