

Defying Gravity: Andrew Airlie



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In the role of Antares flight director Mike Goss, stationed in Mission Control, the *Final Destination 2* star Andrew Airlie plays another of the space mission's key figures.

Airlie recalls that he welcomed the opportunity as a step away from his usual acting roles.

"Mike Goss is one of the masterminds of the more secret element to their mission," says Airlie.

"I was immediately drawn to the character when I first read the script. I tend to play a lot of nice-guy characters and Mike is a guy who is not very concerned about being perceived as a nice guy. He is a guy who never doubts himself, who carries himself

with a bit of conceit – he knows what he's doing; he knows he's right.

"Mike is really an astronaut at heart and he's probably slightly embittered by the fact that he's too old for this mission of a lifetime. Control is hugely important to Mike; it's everything about his job. He has to control so many things in terms of the information that comes out of Mission Control, how much he lets the press know about various aspects of the Antares mission and the facts about the previous Mars mission," adds the Scottish-Canadian actor.

And it's thanks to that earlier Mars mission that Goss and Donner have a fairly complex and challenging relationship.

As Airlie recounts: "Donner and Goss butt heads a lot because Donner's character isn't privy to everything that Mike knows. There's also something in Donner that Mike both admires and is envious of. Donner can go cowboy at any moment; he can be his own man. Goss is very much a company man, and knows what the hierarchy is and how it should work. Those different styles conflict quite a lot so they're often at loggerheads."

Airlie also feels that the show has a unique design and explores some fundamental truths about the kind of people who choose to risk their lives in outer space.

"I think the show has a very big heart. It's about a lot of things. I've heard it described as 'Grey's Anatomy in space', which I guess would make us Grey's Astronomy, but I think it's much more than any one thing.

"It's not just a space or science-fiction show where you have eight astronauts travelling through the solar system and either combating or trying to make contact with alien races. It's got a smaller, tighter concept than that. We're looking at the lives of these really, really exceptional people that are in the astronaut programme and how they come through training together and how they connect with one another, ultimately, sometimes to lose their way from one another, as well," says the Celtic football team supporter.

Having had previous guest star roles in *Smallville* and *The X-Files*, the *Final Destination 2* actor says he didn't have much time to prepare for his role as the mission control Flight Director.

"I came in quite late in the casting process, so I was only on about a week before we started up. Once I knew I was going to be playing the role, I sort of feverishly went around the internet getting various YouTube and NASA clips, and I looked at a few different websites to try to gather and assimilate some information about what it is a Flight Director does.

"Subsequently, I had more opportunity to look into it a little more fully, but it was baptism by fire at the beginning."