

**Black Storm : [ITW] Richard Armitage : « This shoot was decidedly different than The Hobbit »**

Before donning the costume of Thorin Oakenshield for the last time in the ultimate work of the *Hobbit* trilogy – *The Battle of Five Armies* (December 10<sup>th</sup>) – Richard Armitage confronted the storm of the century in *Black Storm*, in theaters beginning August 13<sup>th</sup>. Anticipated by purists as well as addicts of strong sensations, the new film by Steven Quale (*Final Destination 5*) has announced itself as mind-blowing in the view of the first reactions from the lucky people who have seen an advance screening: "Thrills, stress, tension, one's completely plunged into the action. A breathtaking storm," comments a tweep. Playing the courageous Gary Morris, the actor experienced a shoot that bore absolutely no resemblance to what he was previously familiar with. Choice bits of an exceptional interview that he granted to the international press on the set of the catastrophe film of the summer.

Accustomed to blockbusters that resort to a cascade of special effects, Richard Armitage threw himself into the adventure of *Black Storm* with enthusiasm and curiosity. For all that, beyond the spectacular aspects of this shock film, he praises "the natural approach" that the director adopted. He explains, "Steven [Quale] allows the actors the possibility to improvise everything in preserving the spirit of the frame of the story." If he was acting in his first collaboration with the director of the fifth installment of *Final Destination* equally, with *Black Storm*, Richard Armitage was experimenting with his first found footage shoot.

Taken aback by "the infinite possibilities the format offers," the actor clarifies: "The main challenge of the film is its found footage format. Each camera in use corresponds to a character and it doesn't work simply to capture another camera angle, as is usually the case," specifically: "The true challenge in comparison to a traditional shoot is that one is 'captured' by the camera, in place of simply giving a performance in front of it." Conceding that "recreating catastrophic weather conditions in a storm does not offer the comfort of a traditional shoot," Richard Armitage insists, "This shoot is decidedly different than that of *The Hobbit* ... more instinctive, more immediate. It gave me the impression that we were in the process of making a documentary film."

Asked about the message that it reinforces, the actor who plays Gary evokes "the heroic part that exists in each of us." "*Black Storm* creates the portrait of an ordinary man, father of a family, who will be led to surpass himself," he continues, adding, "An event of such intensity transforms this 'everyman' into a man capable of moving through a fiery building or saving a child from drowning." To the question, "Have you ever experienced anything like this?" the actor responds without evasion: "I was confronted with an earthquake, but it's really different than a tornado. It lasts for less time and in general, it's already over just when you realize that it's there. I have never experienced a weather catastrophe of the size of those in *Black Storm*," he recounts.

Comparing the tornado in the film to a "monster," Richard Armitage again increases even more the impatience of fans eager to discover *Black Storm* on French screens next August 13<sup>th</sup>!