

## Cuba Gooding Jr. flies high in 'Red Tails'

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**Dear Ken: Actor Cuba Gooding Jr., who spoke that great line, “Show me the money!” to Tom Cruise in “Jerry Maguire,” what’s he been doing lately?**

Gooding, 44, who was born in The Bronx, N.Y., stars as pipe-smoking Major Emanuelle Stance in the current movie “Red Tails.” Coincidentally, he starred in the 1995 TV movie “The Tuskegee Airmen,” the exact subject of “Red Tails.” Last year, the actor starred in “Ticking Clock,” “The Hit List” and “Sacrifice.” He stars this summer in the thriller “One in the Chamber.” Of his current war film, on which filmmaker George Lucas spent \$58 million of his own money to produce, Gooding says, “Visually, you really feel you’re in these cockpits. Some of the dog fights in this movie really feel like the same thing that we had in ‘Star Wars.’ I think the only difference is that all of the actors in the cockpits are black, except for the Nazis, the Germans trying to shoot them out of the sky.”

**Dear Ken: The two actors who starred as the maids Aibileen and Minny in “The Help” were wonderful. What are their names and where did they grow up?**

Viola Davis, 46, who played Aibileen Clark, was born on her grandmother’s farm in St. Matthews, S.C., and grew up in Central Falls, R.I. Her movie credits include “Traffic,” “Antwone Fisher,” “Solaris,” “Syriana” and “Doubt” and she was in the TV series “Law & Order: SVU” and played Tom Selleck’s deputy Molly Crane in the “Jesse Stone” TV movies. Davis has two Tony Awards for her work in “Fences” and “King Hedley II.”

Octavia Spencer, 41, who played Minny Jackson, was born and raised in Montgomery, Ala., and earned an English degree at Auburn University. She played Constance Grady on the TV series “Ugly Betty” and was in the movies “A Time To Kill,” “Big Momma’s House,” “Spider-Man,” “Coach Carter,” “Miss Congeniality 2” and “Halloween 2.”

**Dear Ken: Who is playing Bilbo Baggins in the new film version of “The Hobbit”?**

Director Peter Jackson’s “Hobbit” will come to the big screen in two parts. The first one opens in December with Brit actor Martin Freeman, 40, as Baggins. Known mainly for his work in English TV and films, he starred as Dr. Watson in the BBC’s recent series “Sherlock” and played Tim Canterbury in the British version of “The Office.” He also co-starred in the 2004 film “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.”

**Dear Ken: Is actress Betty Lynn, who played Barney’s girlfriend Thelma Lou on “The Andy Griffith Show” still living?**

Lynn, 85, is fine and dandy and making her home in Mt. Airy, N.C., Griffith’s hometown. The Kansas City native, who started making movies in Hollywood in 1948, makes frequent appearances at the Andy Griffith Museum where she signs autographs for fans. Among her movie credits are “Apartment for Peggy,” “Cheaper by the Dozen,” “June Bride” and “Father Is a Freshman.”

*If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](#)*

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