

# Exclusive Interview: Chris Ashworth



Chris Ashworth's going from one battleground to another. Best known for his role as Sergei 'Serge' Malatov on the acclaimed TV series *The Wire*, the martial-artist is swapping the soiled scum-riddled streets of Baltimore for the bleak post-apocalyptic topography of *Terminator Salvation*. CLINT MORRIS chats to the actor, and all-round ass-kicker, about his role as in this year's most anticipated sequel.

Believe it or not, Chris Ashworth was never a big fan of the original *Terminator* series growing up – but probably only because he didn't get to see a lot of movies out there in Virginia.

"I remember bits of pieces of [The *Terminator* movies], but I wasn't as crazy about those films as many people were", says the 34-year-old actor. "I was nine when the first one came out and I didn't see a lot of movies back then, so that's probably why I didn't experience the craze like everyone else. I think Robert Patrick chasing the car stood out to me as much as Arnold in the memories I did have of the films. However, before I auditioned and then met with McG, I made sure to watch all three, back to back to back. That made for a good day."

But it goes without saying that 'fan or no fan', Ashworth had to pinch himself when he arrived on set.

"It was definitely a surreal feeling that I had while on set and still now, knowing that after many years, *Terminator* was coming back and I was going to be a part of it. I knew it had a huge fan base and that people were highly anticipating the project."

There were just as many concerned that the project might turn sour though – if only because of who was directing it.

Ashworth says director McG may be best known for his *Charlie's Angels* movies, but here, he'll prove to audiences he's capable of much, much more than shooting quickly-edited action over Pink music.

"I think he did an amazing job", says Ashworth, who worked with Christian Slater on *Love Lies Bleeding* and Keanu Reeves on *The Watcher*. "I am positive that people will enjoy this. McG was a pleasure to work with and really took a true and sincere interest in the story and history of the *Terminator*. He went deeper than just the surface of the characters or events. He really was interested in telling a good story and making a quality piece as opposed to simply making something that looks like an expensive music video."



McG also had the smarts to cast Ashworth as Richter- one of the more mysterious characters of the film.

"This is probably where I should say, "He's misunderstood", but actually he's not. I've just always wanted to give that reply. Haha. He's a nasty, evil person who obviously doesn't get out much. He's definitely not the one you'd pick out hoping that your daughter brings him home."

And while the actor won't reveal which actors he works the most with on the film ("I should probably let that be a surprise!") he will say he has a pretty cool fight scene in it. He also walked away from it fairly unbruised – having practiced martial arts for the past ten years.

"I started doing martial arts when I was a kid, but got into the world of MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) muay-thai kickboxing and Brazilian jiu-jitsu around age 22 or so, as the UFC came into existence", Ashworth says. "I've had a couple of streetfights and MMA definitely came in handy in defending myself. I may fight later this year in the cage."

"The President of Spike TV (Communications) thought it'd be a great idea to have me on The Ultimate Fighter since I was so violent on HBO's The Wire as Sergei Malatov, but that's not the direction I want to head, at this time anyway. It's hard to pursue the acting career fully while training as much as needed to perform well in the cage. However, you never know. It's something I think about quite often."

So, no pizza or beer for Ashworth while he's working on movies then?

"Ha, I'm not much of a drinker anymore, but I've probably never turned down a pizza. I think I may have eaten plenty and called it 'character work'. That's an integral part of acting, the ability to blame things on your character."

Someone that's also probably geared up to blame things on his character is Christian Bale (remember the outburst?), who plays John Connor. Ashworth has nothing but praise for the man – he says he is the future leader in this film, and that's all that matters.



“Without a doubt. No question about it. Christian is an amazing and intense actor. He'll definitely bring a new interest to the 'Terminator' series just like he did with Batman. I think everyone will be happy about it.”

Before work begins on the inevitable fifth "Terminator", Ashworth has “agreed to play the lead in a project which I'll leave unmentioned since the director just offered it to me yesterday. However, I'm supposed to be doing a mixed-martial arts film that should be starting soon. There are a couple other projects that I'm looking at and talking with producers about as we speak. I can tell you also that I'm having to stay away from the pizza now because I need to be shredded in the next several films that I do”, he says, adding jokingly “My character would do it””.

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