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# Scots officer got blame for sinking Titanic but I'll show he was a hero



Shouting the odds ... Brian McCauley plays First Officer Murdoch

By MARC DEANIE

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**THE Scottish First Officer blamed for sinking the Titanic will be portrayed as a HERO in a new TV blockbuster.**

Glasgow-born actor Brian McCauley plays Lieutenant William Murdoch in epic four-part drama Titanic, to be screened on ITV1 later this month.

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It marks the 100th anniversary of the tragedy which killed more than 1,500 people.

Murdoch, of Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, had been considered a hero for his attempts to save the ship on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York.

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**It was a Scot wot sunk Titanic**

LINER'S Scottish First Officer was to blame for sinking the doomed ship, new report says

However, a report by researchers last year said the sailor — in charge of the bridge when the ocean liner struck an iceberg — had delayed changing course for a full 30 seconds.

McCauley — who's starred in films like The Damned United, Rob Roy and Speed 2: Cruise Control — is having none of that.

The 47-year-old said: "He was responsible for saving many of the survivors because he took the decision that not only women and children would be allowed on the lifeboats. He said if there were no more women or children around then men could get on some of the lifeboats as well."



Dramatic ... the new show

"I hope this portrayal may rehabilitate him because it shows his doubts about the captain's decision-making while Murdoch remained completely professional and loyal.

"He had serious doubts — and after the ship hit the iceberg he did try to save as many lives as he could."

The disaster was turned into an Oscar-winning flick by Avatar director James Cameron in 1997.

It starred Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet and was the highest-grossing film of all time until Avatar.

Screen veteran Ewan Stewart played Murdoch in the epic — which is due to be re-released in 3D on April 4.

Murdoch — who was just 39 when he went down with the ship — was depicted as a corrupt coward who shot two passengers before turning the gun on himself.

A year later, movie makers 20th Century Fox apologised for the portrayal.

McCauley said: "He's not been portrayed particularly well in some other dramatisations. After the sinking there were two witnesses who said they saw him shoot himself.

"But there are a host of other witnesses who say he didn't shoot himself.

"So I think he's been ill-served. The people of Dalbeattie are very proud of him."

Murdoch will still be **ARMED** in the new programme. But McCauley insisted: "He fires a gun out to sea to try to bring people to their senses because they were going to rush him and there aren't enough lifeboats.

"He's trying to help them and save them.

"That's one of those mob rule situations where if he didn't fire that gun they would probably tear him limb from limb.

"People were panicking that they were going to die."

The new series is written by Downton Abbey creator Julian Fellowes and cost a whopping £11million to make.

McCauley — who became a cult hero after starring in a controversial Irn-Bru telly ad as Derek the Cuckoo — made a poignant journey to Murdoch's hometown after landing the part.

He revealed: "He's seen there as very much a hero. There's a memorial plaque.

"I drew inspiration while I was there from looking out to the sea.

"He left for that sea when he was 15. His father was a sea captain, his grandfather's four brothers were all sea captains, and he spent his life at sea."

marc.deanie@the-sun.co.uk

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