



MILL VALLEY
FILM FESTIVAL

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32nd Mill Valley Film Festival Honors Woody Harrelson for His Exemplary Contributions to Cinema

*Harrelson to Receive the Mill Valley Film Festival Award in an Onstage Tribute at the
Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center*

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (September 15, 2009) — Academy Award® nominee and Emmy Award winner **Woody Harrelson** will be honored at a special onstage Tribute during the **32nd Mill Valley Film Festival (October 8–18, 2009)** and will receive the **Mill Valley Film Festival Award** on **Thursday, October 15 at 7:00 pm** at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center. The award celebrates Harrelson's dynamic onscreen presence, noting the ease in which he switches between dramatic and comedic roles. The program, presented with support from the Gruber Family Foundation, will include career highlights and an onstage interview followed by a Q&A with the audience. Harrelson will also introduce his newest film, ***The Messenger***, alongside Director **Oren Moverman** and actor **Ben Foster**. A reception follows directly after the event at the Tiburon Grill.

In his first leading role, Foster stars as Will Montgomery, a U.S. Army officer who has just returned home from a tour in Iraq and is assigned to the Army's Casualty Notification service. Partnered with fellow officer Tony Stone (Harrelson) to bear the bad news to the loved ones of fallen soldiers, Will faces the challenge of completing his mission while seeking to find comfort and healing back on the home front. When he finds himself drawn to Olivia (Morton), to whom he has just delivered the news of her husband's death, Will's emotional detachment begins to dissolve and the film reveals itself as a surprising, humorous, moving and very human portrait of grief, friendship and survival. Featuring tour-de-force performances from Foster, Harrelson and Morton, and a brilliant directorial debut by Moverman, *The Messenger* brings us into the inner lives of these outwardly steely heroes to reveal their fragility with compassion and dignity.

After receiving a degree in Theater Arts from Hanover College in Indiana, Harrelson headed to New York City to begin his career as an understudy in Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*. Soon, Harrelson landed the role that would endear him to an audience of millions as the lovable bartender, Woody Boyd, on the long-

running sitcom *Cheers* (1982–93). Through this early success, Harrelson quickly transitioned to feature films, making his big-screen debut as a high-school football player alongside Goldie Hawn in *Wildcats*. After making his mark as the romantic rival in *Doc Hollywood* and the basketball hustler in the surprise hit *White Men Can't Jump*, Harrelson left his comedic nice-guy persona behind by playing the sociopathic serial murderer in Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*. Harrelson went on to further acclaim and earned an Oscar nomination for the title role of the infamous pornographer and First Amendment rights activist in *The People vs. Larry Flynt*. While he has tended to take on supporting roles or fly under the radar in independent films, Harrelson has nonetheless been able to portray a wide array of challenging and complex characters in films such as *Welcome to Sarajevo*, *The Thin Red Line*, *The Hi-Lo Country*, *A Prairie Home Companion*, *The Walker* and, more recently, the Coen brothers' Oscar-winning *No Country for Old Men*.

California Film Institute

The California Film Institute celebrates and promotes film as art and education through the presentation of the Mill Valley Film Festival and year-round exhibitions at the Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center, and by building the next generation of filmmakers and audiences through CFI Education. For more information visit cafilm.org or call 415.383.5256.

32nd Mill Valley Film Festival

Presented by the California Film Institute, the 32nd Mill Valley Film Festival runs October 8–18, 2009 at the CinéArts@Sequoia (25 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley), Christopher B. Smith Rafael Film Center (1118 Fourth Street, San Rafael) and other venues throughout the Bay Area. Tickets are \$12.50 (CFI Members, \$10) unless otherwise noted and are available for purchase on September 20–23 for CFI members only, and beginning on September 24 for the general public. Regular tickets may be purchased online at mvff.com. For additional information, please visit mvff.com or call 877.874.MVFF.

Sponsors

As a nonprofit arts organization, MVFF relies on the generosity of its community to sustain not only the festival, but also the year-round programs of the California Film Institute. The invaluable support of our sponsors, foundation, and individual donors ensures our continued success as we celebrate our 32nd year. CFI is once again proud to acknowledge the leadership support of Christopher B. and Jeannie Meg Smith, and the continued major support of the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Gruber Family Foundation, Jennifer Coslett MacCready, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Marin Community Foundation, the Zecca Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. We are also fortunate to have the continued contributions of the following Major Sponsors of the Mill Valley Film Festival: Qantas Airways, Maroevich, O'Shea & Coghlan Insurance Services, Frantoio Ristorante and Olive Oil Co., Zaentz Media Center/Wareham Development, Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), and CFI Membership Sponsor, Wells Fargo. Longtime friend and dedicated supporter of the festival, Bellam Self Storage & Boxes, is also returning as a major sponsor, and will be receiving this year's Distinguished Sponsor Award.

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