



MADMAN

presents

THE MESSENGER



Starring BEN FOSTER, WOODY HARRELSON, SAMANTHA MORTON, JENA MALONE, STEVE BUSCEMI,
EAMONN WALKER

Written by ALESSANDRO CAMON & OREN MOVERMAN

Produced by MARK GORDON, LAWRENCE INGLEE, ZACH MILLER

www.madman.com.au/incinemas

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THE MESSENGER

SYNOPSIS

In his most powerful performance to date, Ben 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 (Woody Harrelson in an Oscar Nominated performance) 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 (Samantha 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.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

IT STARTS WITH THE SCRIPT

Like so many memorable films, everything begins with the script. THE MESSENGER came together after Los Angeles-based producer Alessandro Camon (THE COOLER, THANK YOU FOR SMOKING, AMERICAN PSYCHO) suggested to Oren Moverman, that he write a screenplay about casualty notification officers. "No one was talking about that side of the war in 2005," says Moverman. "Alessandro knew that I knew war. He knew I knew about casualties and notifications. He knew this subject made for instant drama. There was obviously something there." Moverman asked Camon to write it with him, out of respect for his original idea and due to the fact that Camon, the son of writers, possessed the necessary creative mind to help bring the writing to fruition. Camon immediately agreed to the collaboration.

Both Camon, an Italian living in Los Angeles with his family, and Moverman, Israeli by birth, saw themselves as "foreign men looking to cry in a story about hurt and loss and love on the American home front," in the words of Moverman, describing the initial goals for the project. "We developed a pitch that went from three pages to ten, discussing every aspect of the story, and then we pitched it around town." Continues Moverman: "We got on the phone with a few production companies and they were all concerned — it sounded like a war movie! They were fearful. 'Love the idea, hate losing money,' went the typical reply."

A PRODUCER STEPS IN

Co-producer Lawrence Inglee wasn't afraid of the material after he received a treatment from Moverman and Camon outlining their basic elements for the film, which would remain constant during the production's circuitous route from script to screen. While working with producer Mark Gordon (SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, WONDER BOYS) Inglee brought THE MESSENGER to his colleague's attention before bringing to the table Reason Pictures (now known simply as GOOD). GOOD paid for development and Zach Miller came on as producer with Inglee and Gordon.

"The subject matter of the film was, and is, controversial and from that point it was very harrowing to try and obtain financing for the movie," explains Inglee. "The spate of films about Iraq haven't done well in the marketplace — people haven't gone to see them. The idea that this trio of producers was trying to make a film that was related to the Iraq war seemed crazy to every studio and financier in Hollywood. In this initial phase, THE MESSENGER its was developed over the course of two years and went through a series of director attachments, including Roger Michell (NOTTING HILL, ENDURING LOVE, VENUS), Ben Affleck (GONE BABY GONE) and Sydney Pollack.

Moverman and Camon, meanwhile, wrote the script quickly and efficiently, "playing bicoastal ping-pong with it," as Moverman describes the pair's working method. "We had the same goal and the same vision" the director and co-writer admits. "We were shining a light on the people who lived with the consequences of war and telling just a few stories out of thousands." They were working on a non-political war movie about the politics of getting back to life after combat. They aimed for a universal story, one that wasn't solely about grief and how to overcome it, but how to transcend that grief into love and friendship.

A DIRECTOR IS HIRED (FROM WITHIN)

Moverman was about to leave for Berlin to direct a feature film that suddenly fell apart three days before shooting, leaving him open for another directorial assignment. After initially refusing the offer to direct THE MESSENGER, insisting that an established director make the film, Moverman agreed to take the helm of his own screenplay. "I wanted a great humanist to make this movie — I thought it was too important in terms of its subject matter to give to a first-timer like myself," Moverman confesses. "But Lawrence Inglee told me to shut up and just do it, so I accepted the job. Writing for me is putting the film on paper but directing is putting it on film — it has the same concerns, the same issues and the same problems as the writing process, only a different set of limitations. And more people standing around checking their watches."

THE CAST ASSEMBLES

When it came time to cast the film Moverman sought the expertise of casting director Laura Rosenthal (WHATEVER WORKS, THE HOAX, DEAD MAN), who put several gifted actors in front of him for auditions, several of whom responded enthusiastically to the script. “It wasn’t the military angle or the love story or even the narrative,” Moverman explains. “It was the emotion. The actors felt it. They identified with it. They shared their own private stories. It was all there from the beginning.”

After watching the remake of the classic Western 3:10 TO YUMA, and marveling at Ben Foster’s ability to convey warmth and charisma even while playing a villain, Moverman arranged to meet with the rising young star in downtown Manhattan. “I knew he was my guy from the moment he sat down,” Moverman recounts. “He was underdressed on a cold December day with just a thin leather jacket over a white t-shirt and jeans. He ordered Irish coffee and looked me in the eye with such seriousness and humor — I knew that Ben could not only inhabit the character of Staff Sergeant Will Montgomery, but he could also make him anew.” Director and star spent six hours drinking and shook on the collaboration later that same week.

Moverman worked with Foster for several weeks developing the character of Will Montgomery before shooting started in New Jersey. “We’d sit with the script and go over every line,” Moverman remembers. “What made me realize that Ben was going to be great was when he’d tell me ‘I don’t need to say that, give it to Woody, it’s a great line.’ I knew he was searching for something for himself, so that he could be true to this character and not worry about anything else.”

Moverman praises Foster as one of the few young actors of his generation who does not strive to remain a boy in a man’s body. Instead he is a real man, fascinated with exploring the darker corners of life. “There is a maturity and longing to his acting that is so layered,” Moverman says. “It’s sympathetic but it’s also challenging. You can see the drive in Ben to achieve wholeness, which is precisely what Will Montgomery is trying to do.”

But who is Will Montgomery and what does the casualty notification process represent to a wounded and scarred young man returning home from unseen combat horrors? Moverman likens Will to someone in limbo, suspended between normal, everyday life and the hell survived in Iraq by the young soldier. “Casualty notification is a constant reminder to Will that he has to choose to keep living or be done with,” insists Moverman. “Ironically this makes him stronger. He’s able to get back to living through the help of his commanding officer and one of the widows he notifies. He’s not the kind of character who has become cynical or bitter because of the war. On the contrary, he’s looking for a reason to live after surviving that war.”

It is Moverman’s belief that it’s simple to play a soldier if you’re a good actor. But it takes an actor’s keen intuition to bring to life a character as intense and yearning as Will Montgomery’s. Foster went above and beyond the call of duty for this movie, elevating the character to an altogether rare humanity. Adds Moverman, himself a combat

veteran after serving as an Israeli soldier in Lebanon during the first Intifada: “You wear the uniform and you feel it — it makes you feel powerful, strong and special. I think Ben felt this immediately. He found a way to think like someone in the service. But then he had to do the opposite: take a guy who had lived inside a very ordered universe and then break people’s hearts. It’s probably the hardest thing to do in the military — harder even than going to war. You have to confront death in an entirely different way and bring it to these families.”

Foster, whose on-screen intensity in Alan Ball’s *SIX FEET UNDER* and Nick Cassavetes’ *ALPHA DOG*, among other films, has already garnered him accolades as one of the finest young actors of his generation. Approaching the role of Will Montgomery and not knowing much about Moverman’s intentions — that the script was from the writer of *JESUS’ SON* and *I’M NOT THERE* was enough for Foster, himself a fan of both Moverman scripts. After Foster signed on, Moverman arranged to take him and co-star Woody Harrelson to the Walter Reade Hospital in Washington, D.C. in order to prepare for their dual roles as casualty notification officers.

REHEARSAL

Military adviser Paul Sinor accompanied the trio around the Walter Reade facility, introducing them to veterans, doctors, casualty notification and casualty assistance officers — and of course returning soldiers, some of whom were grappling with posttraumatic stress disorder after having lost limbs in combat. One soldier in particular was named Will. Recalls Moverman: “This guy was suffering from head trauma. One of his legs had been left behind in the Middle East and the other was barely hanging on to what remained. Ben knelt down and spoke softly with him and they bonded immediately. Will told us that he wouldn’t see our movie unless the characters depicted were believable as soldiers.” Foster and Harrelson knew then and there that they had their work cut out for them. Foster even insisted on the spot that his character’s name — which was Derek in earlier drafts — be changed to the more poignant and sobering Will.

Foster was devastated both during and after the hospital visit. “The reality of it hit me so fiercely,” admits a rising talent already infamous for his intense, go-for-broke performances. “Whatever political view you hold about war, loss is loss.” He describes walking into one room at Walter Reade and discovering a board filled with names — something the visitors later discovered they were not meant to see as part of their tour. “We saw names and places marked in red as PENDING — name after name,” Foster explains. “Anyone who has died while in service gets thrown up on the board and ‘pending’ means the family hasn’t been informed that their loved one has died. That’s when the reality of the situation hit home — we were sitting in this room play-acting, researching for this picture, and it’s someone’s job to locate the next of kin. That was sobering to say the least.”

Woody Harrelson was offered the part of the volatile Captain Stone after meeting with Moverman at a vegetarian restaurant in Lower Manhattan. “He was both funny and

tragic,” Moverman recalls of the meeting. “He was Tony, I couldn’t argue with that. He even ate off my plate. He looked me in the eye three times over the course of our two hour dinner — I guess he was figuring me out. Then he pounced. And I was game. He told me he was going to cry for real on film for the first time in his career.”

For Harrelson’s part, the trip to Walter Reade left the alumnus of NATURAL BORN KILLERS deeply affected, despite having mixed feelings about the Iraq war. “I’m an outspoken peace activist,” Harrelson admits. “I won’t say I’m anti-war because I prefer to couch it in positive terms — I’m pro-peace.” But one can be opposed to the war and at the same time grow to love the warrior, which is what the actor experienced while preparing for the role, especially during the hospital visit. “We met a bunch of vets there who had come home injured with missing limbs and so forth,” continues Harrelson. “It opened up my heart to meet these incredible people, these warriors, who are getting very little pay for putting their lives on the line for their country. I developed profound respect for them.”

Harrelson had no idea what to expect in terms of casualty notification other than his conversations with several Army officials, who admitted it was the toughest job in the military. “I tend to be one who can keep his emotions in check fairly easily and in fact I almost never cry,” Harrelson concedes. But from the first of six notifications delivered with co-star Foster over the course of the film, Harrelson knew it was an unforgettable experience. Continues Harrelson: “Somehow my imagination latched hold of the reality of the situation and it became this incredible emotional journey through the delivery of all six casualty notifications — I can’t remember being so deeply affected by a role.”

In terms of working with co-star Foster, Harrelson was aware of the young actor’s talents and had even spoken briefly with his future co-star during a meeting with Sean Penn some months earlier. But there was no prior contact until both roles had been cast during the pre-production phase. It wasn’t until Moverman and Foster met Harrelson at New York City’s Penn Station for the train journey to Washington D.C.’s Walter Reade Hospital that the two co-stars could finally get to know one another. “Ben’s a very intense guy with a twisted sense of humor, which I love,” Harrelson recalls of the first meeting with co-star on the train. “I found him to be incredibly articulate and smart and we got along great from the beginning. When we started working together on set it suddenly hit me that this guy could probably go on to win prizes for his work in this film.”

Foster in the role of Sergeant Montgomery saw his on-screen relationship with Harrelson’s gruff, tee-totaling Colonel Tony Stone as something akin to love at first sight — at its heart, THE MESSENGER is also an unexpected love story between two men, albeit a platonic one. “There’s that terrible word,” Foster volunteers. “It was a full-fledge bromance with Woody! I wish there was a better word for it. It’s tricky material because the script that Oren co-wrote is so human; it would have been easy to get overly precious (in developing the on-screen bond between Will and Tony). Oren kept pushing us away from that while at the same time encouraging Tony’s manic energy, which is a very specific kind of energy coming from Woody. As an actor, he’s just so full of life.”

Moverman already knew Samantha Morton from her critically lauded work in Alison MacLean's JESUS' SON, which he scripted from the short story volume by Denis Johnson. "There's no one else like her," Moverman admits of the U.K.-born talent. "She's an actor's actor and she is sublime. She goes in deeper than anyone and comes out smiling. Her brother was in Iraq during production on the film, she had just had a baby and even breast-fed on the set. She made everyone fall in love with her. And she had so much on-screen chemistry with Ben that I could see, for the first time, how easily we could have made it into the forbidden love story that Sydney Pollack originally suggested."

A STRONG SUPPORTER

Before the shoot began a copy of the script was submitted to the U.S. Army, which became interested in the project — much to the surprise of the filmmakers, who were initially wary of seeking official military approval. "We never expected the Army to support the film," co-producer Inglee admits. "We were so nervous about showing it to them the first time. We wanted to get the story just right, because everyone is afraid of death anyway. This was about what happens when you go to war — you could die, and the people who love you could be left without you." But Army officials saw it as an honorable film, appreciative and respectful of the fact that it was the first movie of the Iraq crop to be directed by someone who had actually been to war as a soldier. "They also liked the fact that the hero didn't bed the widow," Moverman adds.

Authentic texture was added to the project in the form of invitations sent by the filmmakers to Iraq war veterans, who visited the set during production and even became involved in the filmmaking process itself. "For most people in our country this type of character is an abstraction," Inglee explains. "Just having similar veterans on our set, shooting our photographs and talking to us every day, was a major plus. What didn't come into the film just on the basis of hard facts instead came in on an almost spiritual level with the participation of actual veterans — it would not have been the same without them."

THE CREW

THE MESSENGER filmed for 28 days in New Jersey under director of photography Bobby Bukowski (ARLINGTON ROAD, THE DYING GAUL), with whom Moverman watched several films together in preparation for the shoot, including the Mayles' Brothers SALESMAN, key works by the Belgian filmmaker brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, not to mention such '70s classics as BOUND FOR GLORY, M*A*S*H, THE LONG GOODBYE and COMING HOME. "We decided on a stylized naturalism," Moverman admits. "Nothing flashy — we wanted the film to look like Todd Hido photographs by way of documentary film," in reference to the San Francisco Bay Area photography maverick who specializes in shadowy and meticulously lit suburban exteriors that exude a casual, disturbingly mundane feeling of malevolence, as though horrible revelations were lurking around every corner.

FINAL COMMENTS

"This film is not about casualties of war, really," adds Moverman. "It's more concerned with the people left behind who have to deal with life after the casualties of war have gone away. THE MESSENGER may say a thing or two about war, but ultimately it's about the desire to live; to let life into the darkness and to laugh, even. It shows that there are people who have to deal with war in a way that is not strategic or political, but personal."

"This war that has no end in sight — how you address something like an unjust war as an artist is a tricky thing," Harrelson concludes. "You can come right out and say how wrong the war is. But what about the people involved in the war, over here and over there? They deserve our support. That's the great line that this movie crosses. It supports the soldiers wholeheartedly. I tip my hat to the Army for getting behind it and encouraging people to see it rather than trying to sweep it under the rug."

ABOUT THE CAST

Ben Foster (STAFF SARGEANT WILL MONTGOMERY)

Actor Ben Foster continues to establish himself as one of the most versatile of his generation.

Foster Staff Sargeant Will Montgomery in Oren Moverman's THE MESSENGER opposite Woody Harrelson and Samantha Morton. The film, a moving portrayal of one soldier's (Foster) journey to re-assimilate into the civilian world after his turn in Iraq, was an official selection at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival and won the Silver Bear for Best Screenplay and the Peace Film Award at the 2009 Berlin Film Festival. Recently, the film picked up the Grand Prize at the 2009 Deauville Film Festival. For his first lead role, Foster has been nominated for "Best Breakthrough Performance by an Actor" by the 2009 Gotham Awards as well as honored at this year's Philadelphia Film Festival.

Foster's performance has been heralded as "complex and moving...A stunning use of the actor's innate volatility," by Peter DeBruge of Variety and Mike Goodridge of Screen International proclaims, "A film that sings with great acting. Grabs you by the heart all the way through and doesn't let go! One of the absolute best of the year."

Foster is currently in production on THE MECHANIC, co-starring opposite Jason Statham and Donald Sutherland. The action packed film is directed by Simon West and will be released in 2011. Based on the 1972 film of the same name which starred Charles

Bronson and Jan-Michael Vincent, the story follows a hitman (Statham) who takes on a young apprentice (Foster) after a family tragedy. Recently, Foster completed *HERE* for director Braden King, the first feature length, English-language, American film to be entirely shot in Armenia. The project is produced by Lars Knudsen and Jay Van Hoy through their shingle Parts and Labor Production, and executive produced by Julia King and Zoe Kevork, and will be released in 2010.

In 2007, his portrayal in James Mangold's *3:10 TO YUMA* as outlaw Charlie Prince, a cold blooded killer with a pair of deadly six guns and a love for using them, earned Foster rave reviews. Of his performance, Todd McCarthy of *Variety* noted, " Ben Foster puts the kind of indelible imprint on this juicy role that, in earlier eras, allowed such thespians as Lee Marvin, Richard Boone, Dan Duryea, James Coburn, Jack Palance, Lee Van Cleef, Strother Martin, and others to immortalize themselves in the annals of Western villainy. He is a mad delight to watch." Foster and the cast of *3:10 TO YUMA* were nominated for a SAG Best Ensemble Award.

In early 2007, Foster was seen in Nick Cassavetes' *"Alpha Dog"*, opposite Sharon Stone and Emile Hirsch, for which he was honored with *Movieline's "Hollywood Life Breakthrough Performance Award."* In the film, Foster plays Jake Mazursky, a crystal meth addicted skin head looking to exact revenge for the kidnapping of his brother.

Foster's credits also include the blockbuster film *"X-Men 3: The Last Stand."* Directed by Brett Ratner, Foster portrayed Warren Worthington III/Angel in 20th Century Fox's successful franchise. The cast included Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellan, Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry and Famke Janssen. *"X-Men 3"* was the highest grossing film of the franchise, bringing in over \$460 million dollars in worldwide box office sales alone. Additional credits include: *"30 Days of Night"*, opposite Josh Hartnett, *"Hostage"* opposite Bruce Willis, *"The Punisher"* opposite Thomas Jane, *"Northfork"* opposite James Woods, Anthony Edwards and Daryl Hannah, and Barry Levinson's *"Liberty Heights"* which marked his film debut.

On television, Foster shared the SAG Award for Best Ensemble Cast for his work in the 2003 season of HBO's critically acclaimed drama *"Six Feet Under"* in which he portrayed Russell Corwin for three seasons. He was also a part of the Emmy nominated HBO telefilm *"The Laramie Project."* He appeared in several episodes of the cult hit *"Freaks and Geeks"* as the mentally handicapped student Eli. His lead performance in Showtime's *"Bang Bang You're Dead"* garnered Foster a Daytime Emmy. Foster currently lives in New York.

Woody Harrelson (CAPTAIN TONY STONE)

Woody Harrelson's rare mix of intensity and charisma consistently surprises and delights audiences and critics alike for his work in both mainstream and independent projects.

Most recently, Harrelson could be seen in Stuart Townsend's *BATTLE IN SEATTLE* with Charlize Theron, Andre Benjamin and Ray Liotta, Brad Anderson's *TRANSSIBERIAN* starring opposite Emily Mortimer and Ben Kingsley and Gabriele Muccino's *SEVEN POUNDS* starring Will Smith and Rosario Dawson. Upcoming films include *BUNRAKU*, directed by Guy Moshe and co-starring Josh Hartnett and Demi Moore. Harrelson recently completed filming on *DEFENDOR* for director Peter Stebbings, costarring Kat Dennings.

Harrelson's critically-acclaimed portrayal of controversial magazine publisher Larry Flynt in Milos Forman's *THE PEOPLE VS LARRY FLYNT* garnered him Academy Award, Golden Globe, and Screen Actors Guild Nominations as Best Actor. Other highlights from Harrelson's film career include *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN*, *SEMI PRO*, *AFTER THE SUNSET*, *PLAY IT TO THE BONE*, *THE THIN RED LINE*, *THE HI-LO COUNTY*, *ED TV*, *WAG THE DOG*, *WELCOME TO SARAJEVO*, *KINGPIN*, *NATURAL BORN KILLERS*, *INDECENT PROPOSAL*, *WHITE MEN CAN'T JUMP*, *THE BIG WHITE*, *A SCANNER DARKLY*, *NORTH COUNTRY*, *THE PRIZE WINNER OF DEFINANCE*, *OHIO*, *A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION* and Zak Penn's ensemble comedy *THE GRAND*.

Harrelson first endeared himself to millions of viewers as a member of the ensemble cast of NBC's long-running hit comedy, *CHEERS*. For his work as the affable bartender Woody Boyd, he won an Emmy in 1988 and was nominated four additional times during his eight-year run on the show. In 1999, he gained another Emmy nomination when he reprised the role in a guest appearance on the spin-off series *FRASIER*. He later made a return to television with a recurring guest role on the hit NBC series, *WILL AND GRACE*.

Balancing his film and television work, in 1999 Harrelson directed his own play, *FURTHEST FROM THE SUN* at the Theatre de la Juene Lune in Minneapolis. He followed next with the Roundabout's Broadway revival of *THE RAINMAKER*; Sam Shepherd's *THE LATE HENRY MOSS*, and John Kolvenbach's *ON AN AVERAGE DAY* opposite Kyle MacLachlan at London's West End. Harrelson directed the Toronto premiere of Kenneth Lonergan's *THIS IS OUR YOUTH* at the Berkeley Street Theatre. In the winter of 2005 Harrelson returned to London's West End, starring in Tennessee Williams' *NIGHT OF THE IGUANA* at the Lyric Theatre.

A committed environmentalist, Harrelson joined his activism with his film efforts in Ron Mann's *GO FURTHER*, a road documentary following Woody and friends on their bicycle journey down the Pacific Coast Highway from Seattle to Santa Barbara. Along with being a father to his three beautiful daughters, closest to his heart is www.voiceyourself.com, a website Harrelson co-created with his wife Laura Louie which promotes and inspires individual action to create global momentum towards simple organic living and to restore balance and harmony to our planet.

Samantha Morton (OLIVIA PITTERSON)

With only a handful of film credits to her name, British actress Samantha Morton earned a reputation as one of the most critically lauded up-and-comers of the late '90s.

Smallboned and possessed of almost elfin features, Morton, who was born in Nottingham in 1977, began acting on television at the age of 13. She appeared in a number of series, including the popular crime drama CRACKER and such costume extravaganzas as JANE EYRE and EMMA.

Morton became known to an international film audience in 1997, when she won wide acclaim for her wrenching, fearless portrayal of a young woman driven to promiscuous behavior by the death of her mother in Carine Adler's UNDER THE SKIN. The following year, she did starring work in THE LAST YELLOW and DREAMING OF JOSEPH LEES, playing the girlfriend of a small-time crook in the former and a dissatisfied young woman harboring romantic feelings for her long-absent second cousin (Rupert Graves) in the latter.

In 1999, Morton's name became an increasingly familiar one to American filmgoers, thanks to starring roles in two very different films. The first, JESUS' SON, cast the actress as a heroin addict, while the second, Woody Allen's SWEET AND LOWDOWN, featured her as a shy, mute woman who gets used and abused by a legendary jazz guitarist (Sean Penn) whose musical talent runs in inverse proportion to his qualities as a human being.

Heralded for both films, Morton scored a surprise Best Supporting Actress Oscar nomination for the latter. Not resting on the laurel, the actress immediately set to work with a pair of venerable cineastes, directors Julien Temple (in PANDEMONIUM) and Amos Gitai (in his first English-language production, EDEN). Director Steven Spielberg soon followed Allen's lead, casting Morton in a small but pivotal role as a shivering, near-mute, clairvoyant "Precog" in his Blade Runner-esque mystery MINORITY REPORT, which premiered in the summer of 2002.

Though the film would introduce Morton to her largest audience yet, it was a pair of independent features released in late 2002 and 2003 that would garner her even more significant critical attention. Teaming with the maverick Scottish director Lynne Ramsay, the actress would essay the enigmatic, directionless title character in MORVERN CALLAR, a dreamy, elliptical adaptation of Alan Warner's cult novel. About a year later, Morton would see the release of IN AMERICA, Jim Sheridan's acclaimed slice-of-life tale of an Irish family immigrating to New York City's Hell's Kitchen, for which she would receive her second Academy Award nomination, this time for Best Actress.

In 2004 she appeared in two films: Michael Winterbottom's CODE 46 with Tim Robbins, and Roger Michell's ENDURING LOVE. In 2005, she appeared in Vincent Ward's RIVER QUEEN and Laurence Dunmore's THE LIBERTINE. Morton would go on to depict the infamous child killer Myra Hindley in the 2006 television film LONGFORD, for which she received an Emmy nomination and a Golden Globe win for Best Supporting Actress. In

2007, Morton took on the role of a Marilyn Monroe lookalike who befriends a Michael Jackson impersonator in Harmony Korine's MISTER LONELY, which she followed up with a portrayal of Mary Stuart in ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE. In 2008, Morton appeared in the highly anticipated Charlie Kaufman film SYNECHOCHE, NEW YORK.

Jena Malone (KELLY)

This is a very exciting time for her as she starred in THE RUINS for Dreamworks/Paramount and the Indy film THE GO-GETTER this year.

Jena is attached to star in the Allison Anders movie COMFORT with Kelly MacDonald and Emily Watson and in Noah Buschel's MU as Maura O'Halloran, the adaptation of a memoir by Maura O'Halloran, which is drawn from her experiences as a 24-year old Irish woman making the journey to Japan to study Zen and become a Zen master.

She can also be seen in the Joe Wrights film THE SOLOIST opposite Robert Downey, Jr. Jena can next be seen on stage as she stars in Eugene O'Neill's Off-Broadway MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA as "Lavinia" in February 2009. Jena Malone has had the kind of career most actors can only dream of. Jena was seen in the critically acclaimed Paramount/Vantage drama INTO THE WILD opposite Emile Hirsch and Marcia Gay Harden, based on the best selling book by John Krakauer and directed by Sean Penn.

She's worked side by side with modern day legends including Jodie Foster in CONTACT and DANGEROUS LIVES OF ALTER BOYS, Susan Sarandon and Julia Roberts in STEPMOM, Kevin Costner FOR LOVE OF THE GAME and Kevin Kline in LIFE AS A HOUSE. She also starred in SAVED for United Artists, as well as the cult classic DONNIE DARKO with Jake Gyllenhaal, THE UNITED STATES OF LELAND with Kevin Spacey, PRIDE & PREJUDICE where she starred opposite Kiera Knightly and was the only American cast as a Brit and was also a part of the all-star ensemble in Anthony Minghella's COLD MOUNTAIN.

ABOUT THE CREW

Oren Moverman (DIRECTOR)

Born in Israel, Oren moved to New York to work in film in 1988 after completing four years of military service as an infantry soldier.

He co-wrote Todd Haynes' Bob Dylan biopic I'M NOT THERE, starring Cate Blanchett, Christian Bale, Heath Ledger, Richard Gere, Michelle Williams, Julianne Moore and Charlotte Gainsbourg, a Weinstein Company release. Oren also collaborated with Ira Sachs on MARRIED LIFE, a 2008 Sony Pictures Classics release, starring Rachel McAdams, Chris Cooper, Pierce Brosnen and Patricia Clarkson, and on THE GOODBYE PEOPLE, currently casting.

Oren penned INTERRUPTED about legendary director Nicholas Ray, for City Lights Pictures with Phillip Kaufman directing, and WILLIAM BURROUGHS' QUEER for actor/director Steve Buscemi. Both films are currently casting for a 2009 shoot. Oren served as screenwriter of FACE, an Indican release, starring Bai Ling, Treach and Kristy Wu. Directed by Bertha Bay-Sa Pan, FACE premiered in competition at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival.

Oren was also a screenwriter and associate producer of JESUS' SON, a 2000 Lion's Gate/Alliance Release. Directed by Alison Maclean, the film stars Billy Crudup, Samantha Morton, Jack Black, Holly Hunter & Dennis Hopper.

THE MESSENGER is his first film as a director

Alessandro Camon (CO-SCREENWRITER)

Alessandro Camon was born in Padua, Italy, and currently lives in Los Angeles.

He started his career in Italy as a film critic, and has published several books and essays, both in English and Italian. After graduating in philosophy at the University of Padua he obtained an MA in Film from UCLA and started working in production. His producing credits include OWNING MAHOWNY, THANK YOU FOR SMOKING, THE COOLER, BAD LIEUTENANT: PORT OF CALL NEW ORLEANS, and WALL STREET 2: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS. THE MESSENGER is his first produced screenplay in the US.

Alessandro has also adapted THE CHANCELLOR MANUSCRIPT with Leonardo Di Caprio attached to star, THE KILLER, with David Fincher attached to direct, and LAND OF THE LIVING, to be directed by Alex Holmes (currently casting.) Current projects include an adaptation of French graphic novel HEADSHOTS for Warner Brothers and a historical drama for HBO, with James Gandolfini producing.

Alessandro is married to film producer Suzanne Warren.

Mark Gordon (PRODUCER)

MARK GORDON is an award-winning producer with more than 60 motion picture and television projects to his credit.

Gordon is currently in post-production on 2012 directed by Roland Emmerich. He recently wrapped up 12 ROUNDS, directed by Renny Harlin, released in the USA in March 2009. Gordon's latest film credits include the epic adventure 10,000 BC, directed by Roland Emmerich; Kasi Lemmons' TALK TO ME, starring Don Cheadle; THE HOAX, directed by Lasse Hallstrom and starring Richard Gere; and John Curran's THE PAINTED VEIL, starring Edward Norton and Naomi Watts.

For television, Gordon is currently an executive producer on the smash hit ABC series GREY'S ANATOMY, spin-off series PRIVATE PRACTICE, as well as the hit CBS drama CRIMINAL MINDS, Lifetime's ARMY WIVES, and the CW's REAPER.

Gordon earned Academy Award and BAFTA nominations and won a Golden Globe for Best Picture as producer of Steven Spielberg's SAVING PRIVATE RYAN. The film also won Best Picture honors from the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, London and Broadcast Film Critics, among others, and brought Gordon a Producer of the Year Award from the Producers Guild of America.

Gordon's wide-ranging film credits as a producer also include CASANOVA, starring Heath Ledger and directed by Lasse Hallstrom; HOSTAGE, starring Bruce Willis; the Roland Emmerich-directed films THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW, starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Dennis Quaid, and THE PATRIOT, starring Mel Gibson; PAULIE, which won a BAFTA Award for Best Children's Film; BROKEN ARROW, starring John Travolta; and Jan de Bont's action hit SPEED, which catapulted Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock to international stardom.

As an executive producer, Gordon's film credits include PRIME, starring Meryl Streep and Uma Thurman; THE MATADOR, starring Pierce Brosnan; Sam Raimi's A SIMPLE PLAN; and THE JACKAL, starring Richard Gere, Bruce Willis and Sidney Poitier.

Gordon has also been involved in the financing and production of such films as LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER starring Angelina Jolie; WONDER BOYS, directed by Curtis Hanson and starring Michael Douglas; MAN ON THE MOON, starring Jim Carrey under the direction of Milos Forman; and Mike Nichols' PRIMARY COLORS, starring John Travolta.

Gordon has produced more than a dozen longform television projects. He served as an executive producer on the HBO movie WARM SPRINGS, starring Kenneth Branagh, which received 16 Emmy nominations, winning five, including Outstanding Made for Television Movie. He also executive produced HBO's AND STARRING PANCHE VILLA AS HIMSELF, directed by Bruce Beresford and starring Antonio Banderas, which garnered nine Emmy Award nominations; and produced THE WAR BETWEEN THE CLASSES, for which Gordon won an Emmy for Best Children's Program. He also directed and produced the Emmy nominated CHILDREN REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST.

Gordon's first producing effort was the off-Broadway production of THE BUDDY SYSTEM at Circle in the Square downtown.

Gordon is the former chairman of Teach for America Los Angeles and a former board member of The Holocaust Documentation and Information Center. He is the current vice president of the Producers Guild of America and is a board member of the Virginia Film Festival, University Elementary School at UCLA and The JTN. He is a graduate of New York University Film School.

Lawrence Inglee (PRODUCER)

Chief Creative Officer Lawrence Inglee spearheads all story development and production efforts at Lightstream.

Lawrence's fast-rising career trajectory has been fueled by a passion for storytelling and education, from his early days at Ron Howard and Brian Grazer's Imagine Entertainment (A BEAUTIFUL MIND) through his rise from Creative Executive to Co-President of The Mark Gordon Company (SAVING PRIVATE RYAN, GREYS ANATOMY, SPEED).

At The Mark Gordon Company, Lawrence was instrumental in developing tent pole movies including THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW. He has recently developed and supervised a large slate of projects including TRIPOLI (director Ridley Scott and writer William Monahan), OLYMPIA (writer Jacob Aaron Estes) and RAMPART (director Stephen Frears and writer James Ellroy).

Lawrence was also an adjunct screenwriting professor at The University of Southern California and an inspirational lecturer for Inner-City Filmmakers, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating lasting positive change in the lives of inner-city youth.

Zach Miller (PRODUCER)

Zach Miller received a B.A. in English in 2001 from The University of Pennsylvania and an M.F.A. in Film from U.S.C.'s Peter Stark Program in 2005. Since 2006 Zach has been responsible for overseeing development and production at GOOD (formerly known as Reason Pictures). During that time GOOD produced THE POWER OF THE GAME directed by Michael Apter and SON OF RAMBOW directed by Garth Jennings. The latter was the highest selling film at Sundance 2007 and was released in May 2008 by Paramount Vantage. GOOD also financed the UNTITLED BARACK OBAMA DOCUMENTARY, which will air on HBO in 2008.

Other projects GOOD currently developing are MARCHING POWDER, which will star Don Cheadle and is currently being written and will be directed by Jose Padilha (ELITE SQUAD); THE FUTURIST, which will be written and directed by Andrew Adamson (SHREK, NARNIA); the Jerzy Kosinski biopic ABOUT THE AUTHOR, written and to be directed by Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe (BROTHERS OF THE HEAD); LIVE NUDE GIRLS UNITE!, written by Shauna Cross (WHIP IT!) and to be directed by Nicole Kassell (THE WOODSMAN); and THE OUTSIDER, based on the novel by Richard Wright.

Gwen Bialic (CO-PRODUCER)

Gwen Bialic has been working in New York independent film for the last 10 years.

Starting out on award winning projects like HIGH ART, GIRLFIGHT, and PERSONAL VELOCITY, she has gone on to work with John Waters (A DIRTY SHAME), Jim Jarmusch (BROKEN FLOWERS), and Michel Gondry (BE KIND REWIND). She coproduced OUTSOURCED, a feature film shot in Mumbai, India and has line produced various New York based projects. Most recently, Gwen line produced and supervised post production on Lou Reed's concert film BERLIN directed by Julian Schnabel and completed the upcoming feature STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK which she line produced for Why Not Productions (France) and Europa Corp.

Gwen is co-producer of THE MESSENGER and honored to be part of Oren Moverman's directorial debut.

Bobby Bukowski (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Director of Photography Bobby Bukowski has shot more than two dozen feature films. Pervious to shooting THE MESSENGER, Bukowski shot PHOEBE IN WONDERLAND directed by Daniel Barnz, THE GUITAR for director Amy Redford, and Kari Skogland's THE STONE ANGEL.

Born in New York City, Bukowski attended SUNY at Stony Brook, securing his masters degree in biochemistry. En route to medical school, he set his gaze upon more artistic endeavors. He left the United States for extensive travel in Europe and Asia. This adventure led to a job as photographer's assistant in Paris. Soon after, he was enlisted to archive a Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage, led by the Dalai Lama, to all the sacred Buddhist sites along the Ganges River. This marked the first time he had a moving camera in his hand.

Returning home, he entered the Graduate Film program at NYU's Tisch School of the arts, where he received his master of fine arts degree. He financed his schooling by working as a bike messenger. Armed with a still camera, he honed his sense of composition and lighting. Everything he saw in the streets became a potential study in cinematography: the way the light bounced off the windows of a glass skyscraper, the city's ambient light roiling under dense low fog, the diverse pageant of faces along the avenues.

Bukowski continues to champion independent films and the endeavors of first-time directors. He finds it stimulating to collaborate with minds he finds innocent of habit. He believes their approach is unencumbered by experience and as a result, they discover unique ways to handle common and complex situations. This allows Bukowski to see his craft with new eyes.

Alex Hall (EDITOR)

Alex began his career in television and film in 1995, editing his first feature GIRLSTOWN, directed by Jim McKay (winner of the Filmmakers Trophy at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival).

His numerous editing credits include HBO's THE WIRE, NBC's Emmy winning WITNESSES AND WISEGUYS: THE HISTORY OF THE MOB, A&E's INKED, the ABC special ELVIS LIVES!, and the HBO film ANGEL RODRIGUEZ. Alex was the editor of the 2003 documentary SAM COOK: LEGEND (Grammy winner for Best Long Form Music Video). His other film credits include KISS ME GUIDO, TAXMAN, OUR SONG, and EVERYDAY PEOPLE.

OMNILAB MEDIA GROUP PRESENTS
in association with SHEREZADE FILM DEVELOPMENT CO. LTD. and BZ ENTERTAINMENT
a MARK GORDON COMPANY/GOOD Worldwide production

an OREN MOVERMAN film

Official Selection: Sundance Film Festival 2009
Winner: Best Screenplay – Silver Bear, Berlinale 2009
Winner: Peace Film Award, Berlinale 2009
Winner: Grand Prize, Deauville American Film Festival 2009
Winner: International Critics' Prize, Deauville American Film Festival 2009

THE MESSENGER

Directed by
OREN MOVERMAN

Written by
ALESSANDRO CAMON & OREN MOVERMAN

Produced by
MARK GORDON
LAWRENCE INGLEE
ZACH MILLER

Executive Producers
BEN GOLDBIRSH
CHRISTOPHER MAPP
MATTHEW STREET
DAVID WHEALY

Executive Producers

BRYAN ZURIFF

SHAUN REDICK

Director of Photography

BOBBY BUKOWSKI

Production Designer

STEPHEN BEATRICE

Editor

ALEX HALL

Costume Designer

CATHERINE GEORGE

Original Music by

NATHAN LARSON

Music Supervisor

TRACY MCKNIGHT

Co-Producer

GWEN BIALIC

Casting by

LAURA ROSENTHAL AND ALI FARRELL

BEN FOSTER

WOODY HARRELSON

SAMANTHA MORTON

JENA MALONE

STEVE BUSCEMI

EAMONN WALKER