

Meet the Faith Hero Taking Hollywood by Storm

It has been 10 years since Mel Gibson went on a drunken anti-Semitic rant that made him a Hollywood outcast, but the actor and director is finally climbing back into the industry's good graces.

Gibson has kept a low profile with just a handful of small acting roles since his 2006 arrest in Malibu for drunk driving, after which he apologized for launching a diatribe against Jews and sought treatment for alcoholism.

Now, his new war drama *Hacksaw Ridge*, out in theaters on Friday, is winning the warmest reviews since his 1995 Oscar-winning movie *Braveheart*.

The film was screened at the Academy of Motion Pictures in Beverly Hills, and on Sunday, Gibson will be named best director at the Hollywood Film Awards—the start of the road to February's Oscars.

"Hacksaw Ridge," is based on the true story of Desmond Doss, a pacifist army medic who served on the frontlines in the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 without ever touching a gun, and was awarded a Medal of Honor for his service.

Its portrayal of unshakeable faith, men under pressure and graphically violent battle scenes has all Gibson's hallmarks, and has a 96 percent approval rate on review aggregator .

The Hollywood Reporter's David Rooney called it "a forceful comeback" by Gibson that "succeeds in combining horror with grace."

"I don't really think it's a war film. I keep saying it's a love story because it's about a man who goes in abhorring the

warring,” Gibson, a staunch Catholic, told Reuters.

The film stars Andrew Garfield as Doss falling in love with a nurse and signing up for the army to be a medic despite being a conscientious objector due to his devout Christian beliefs.

Asked if he faced any challenges in getting *Hacksaw Ridge* made, given his ups and downs in the film industry, Gibson said he came across none.

“I was able to make it quite well,” he said.

But Gibson told trade magazine *Variety* last week that he was annoyed when people brought up the 2006 incident.

“For one episode in the back of a police car on eight double tequilas to sort of dictate all the work, life’s work and beliefs and everything else that I have and maintain for my life is really unfair,” he said. {eo}

© 2016 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.