

Film Review: Emotionally Perfect Cowboy Elegy in ‘The Hero’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on June 20, 2017 - 12:31pm

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CHICAGO – The great character actor Sam Elliott – known mostly for his cowboy roles in film/TV and his unique bass sounding voiceovers – gets an opportunity to deliver a nuanced and emotional performance as a hyper-realized version of himself. There is virtue and truth in this character journey.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

The screenplay, by director Brett Haley and Marc Basch, is brilliantly in line with Elliott’s particular breed of Hollywood character actor. In addition, Elliott’s character has some regrets, and buries it under a cloud of marijuana smoke. All of the tics and situations are handled expertly by Elliott, showing a range of performance that had never been seen from him before... it is his greatest role. Also, the vulnerability of his persona is on full display, which creates a subtlety in the story that is welcome... life isn’t predictable, and it’s refreshing to see the cinema reflect that value. Brett Haley will be a director to watch for many years, as he ponders the expectations of life.

Lee Hayden (Elliott) is a 72-year-old character actor – known mostly for playing cowboys over the years. He is a bit washed up, but can supplement his divorced man lifestyle with voiceover gigs. His leisure includes pot smoking, so conveniently his dealer Jeremy (Nick Offerman) lives in his apartment complex. His life takes a turn when he gets some bad health news, and simultaneously meets Charlotte (Laura Prepon), a stand-up comic.

He takes Charlotte to a low-rent Cowboy Honoree event, where he receives a Lifetime Achievement Award. High on dope and Ecstasy, Lee makes an amazing acceptance speech that goes viral. He’s suddenly a hot commodity again, and uses the notoriety to ignore his health issues... part of which involves his estranged daughter Lucy (Krysten Ritter). The next phase is assessment and acceptance of his life.

“The Hero” was released in Chicago on June 16th, nationwide by July 4th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Sam Elliott, Laura Prepon, Krysten Ritter, Nick Offerman, Katherine Ross and Max Gail. Written by Brett Haley and Marc Basch. Directed by Brett Haley. Rated “R”



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The Future is Nigh for Lee Hayden (Sam Elliott) in ‘The Hero’

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