Betrayal! Cowardice! Treachery!

The new Buzz in Hollywood ain't Nathan Lane

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Despite a row between playwright Terrence McNally and actor Nathan Lane that's gotten so bitter the two aren't speaking, it looks like McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, which wowed Broadway last year, will finally be made into a movie. While details had not been finalized at press time, a deal with Fine Line Cinema for an *LVC* film version is "closer than ever," according to McNally's agent.

The initial plan for the movie had been contingent on signing Lane to reprise his Broadway role as the HIV positive character, Buzz. Lane, whose marquee value has skyrocketed since the success of Mike Nichols' *The Birdcage*, backed out of the project and got a drubbing in the press for pulling the rug out from under the movie. In an inspired bit of casting, producers have signed *Seinfeld* star Jason Alexander (as the irascible George Costanza) to play Buzz.

Lane has given several interviews explaining his decision. According to the actor, who is back on Broadway in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, Fine Line wanted to shoot the movie during September or October of last year. When Lane asked that the production date be pushed back to November because of a prior commitment, Fine Line wouldn't budge. "First of all, I didn't drop out of anything," Lane told Reuters. "There was nothing to drop out of. Fine Line Cinema had not made any deals. I hadn't signed a contract. They called: 'We're offering scale, and we hope that you show up in the fall sometime.' If they were committed and I'm so crucial to it, then five weeks means nothing. It's not '*Buzz! Valour! Compassion!*' And I'm not Sylvester Stallone." Both Lane and McNally declined to speak with *POZ*, citing the need to cool tensions.

According to Barry Krost, the project's producer, Fine Line hopes to begin shooting the film this summer. Joe Montello will make his cinematic directorial debut with the original Broadway cast -- except for Alexander, of course. One detail the deal-makers are sure of: Nathan Lane won't be making any surprise cameos.

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