Rachel Weisz to Play Elizabeth Taylor in a Film About Her AIDS Activism

"A Special Relationship" explores Taylor's friendship with her gay personal assistant and her role in fighting the epidemic.

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An Oscar-winning actress playing a real-life Oscar-winning actress who used her celebrity to fight a deadly epidemic. Sounds like a movie destined for the Oscars, right? We'll soon find out. Rachel Weisz will play film legend Elizabeth Taylor in A Special Relationship, a movie that, according to The Hollywood Reporter, focuses on Taylor's role as an iconic AIDS activist.

The script centers on Taylor's relationship with her gay personal assistant, Roger Wall, who grew up in the Deep South and whom she hired in the mid-1980s, during the first years of the AIDS epidemic. At the time, the government was ignoring the growing crisis. Taylor became a vocal and ferocious AIDS activist, leveraging her celebrity to raise money and fight stigma.

A Special Relationship was written by Simon Beaufoy (Slumdog Millionaire, 127 Hours) and will be directed by female duo Bert & Bertie (Troop Zero). According to The Hollywood Reporter, it is being produced by See-Saw Films (The King's Speech, Lion).

"At its heart, A Special Relationship is a story of friendship, and what better way of guaranteeing that translates to the screen than trusting the directing talents of real-life best friends and creative collaborators Bert & Bertie," the producers said in a statement. "A Special Relationship is a celebration of how friendships can change people's lives and how Elizabeth helped change the world."

Weisz won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in the 2005 thriller The Constant Gardener and was nominated for another Oscar this year for her part in The Favourite. Taylor won two Oscars for her acting in the 1960s—in Butterfield 8 and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf—and was nominated several other times. She died in 2011.

The legacy of Taylor's activism continues today, notably through The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation.

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