

It's a Family Affair



By Kristin McCracken | [1 Comments](#) | March 28, 2012 08:30PM EDT

Alan Cumming, Garret Dillahunt, and one special boy star as a very unlikely 1970s family in Travis Fine's *Any Day Now*.

TRIBECA: Tell us a little bit about *ANY DAY NOW*. How do you describe it in your own words?

TRAVIS FINE: I think [Alan Cumming](#) described it best. A friend of his asked about *ANY DAY NOW*, and he said, "It's a weepy, gay, period drama with a boy with Down syndrome." And his friend said, "No, not another one of *those* movies." [Laughs.] I think ultimately it's a story about three people falling in love—a family love story, with three strangers who find love in a really unexpected place, for all three of them.

TRIBECA: Was it inspired by a true story?

TRAVIS FINE: [George Arthur Bloom](#), who wrote the original screenplay on which *ANY DAY NOW* is based, knew this guy named Rudy who lived in Brooklyn back in the late 70s. Rudy was one of those characters who everyone in the neighborhood knows: this larger than life, flamboyant character. And Rudy did befriend this kid with a pretty severe mental disability—he nurtured him and took care of him. Where we veer from the truth is the whole notion of him trying to adopt the child, and the legal battle that ensues.

TRIBECA: So Bloom wrote the script first, and then you came on board?

TRAVIS FINE: I put the word out after [THE SPACE BETWEEN \[TFF 2010\]](#) that I really wanted to direct somebody else's words, and my music supervisor [P.J. Bloom](#) said, "Hey, my dad has this script he wrote this script over 30 years ago." P.J. gave me a one-sentence logline, and I read it and decided to go ahead and option it.

TRIBECA: Were the elements all there?

TRAVIS FINE: No, it was a very different script. and ultimately I couldn't figure out why I liked the story—I was moved by the character, but I'm a straight guy from the suburbs with three kids. But I've got a seventeen-year-old daughter, and we've gone through some pretty horrific and severe parental alienation. At a certain point I had something very painful and hurtful happen, and I was literally sobbing. As my wife Kristine was holding me, I said, "What right does she have to take that child from me?" And I went, "Oh. I know why I want to tell this story."

ABOUT THIS FILM »



Any Day Now

Feature Narrative | 97 min

DIRECTED BY:
Travis Fine

PRIMARY CAST:
Alan Cumming, Garret Dillahunt, Isaac Leyva, Frances Fisher, Gregg Henry, Don Franklin

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From there I set about to rewrite the script and inject it with my own experience of having a child pulled from me. There's a line at the end when the attorney says, "There's nothing you can do. Mother wants the child, mother gets the child. Not a court in the world will give him to you. The best you can do is hope that she grows up and comes back to you." And that's very personal. So I spent about two months reconstructing the whole script, kind of rebuilding it from the ground up.



TRIBECA: All three leads—[Alan Cumming](#), [Garret Dillahunt](#), [Isaac Leyva](#)—are fantastic. What can you tell us about the casting process?

TRAVIS FINE: Alan was the very first person cast. It was literally a cold call to CAA. As I described the story and the character, they said, "You're talking about Alan Cumming." It turns out Alan's manager was a big fan of [THE SPACE BETWEEN](#). And it all happened really quickly: Alan read the script, he fell in love with it, and he did what you love an actor of his stature to do. He said, "I'll come and join your little party and your little film, and we'll find a way to put this together." It meant a ton to me that he committed so early on.

Garret was a very late addition. We really had a bear of a time trying to find the right person, and we didn't cast him until we were eight or nine days out from shooting. I ultimately talked to him passionately about what I think he could bring to the part. And I'm really glad I pushed.

And then Isaac was, wow, that kid.

TRIBECA: That's a tricky casting call. What can you tell us about that process?

TRAVIS FINE: I saw a pretty wide spectrum of kids with mental disabilities and all forms of special needs. I didn't know exactly what I was looking for, and then I saw Isaac. In his audition, I instantly saw that he was listening and reacting. And when he smiled on his audition tape, that big [mimics Isaac's smile], I just said, "Oh my God. Freeze." [My wife] [Kristine](#) [a producer on the film] and I went down and had an audition with him.

As the character of Marco was written, he had a potty mouth, he talked [back] to his mother, he had tantrums, he threw stuff. And Isaac couldn't do it. He's incapable of that anger. So I rewrote the character and I built it around Isaac; I always knew I was going to have to shape the character around whomever I found to play the part.

Isaac came back and read the new material, and it was very sweet. At the end, I said, "I need you to dance, because there's a scene where Marco really busts loose." When we turned on the music, he was so nervous, and finally his acting teacher took his hand and starting dancing with him. Pretty soon, he was going wild.

I cut off the music, and I looked at him, and I said, "How'd you like to come do this movie with us?" And he smiled, and said, "Okay." And I looked at the casting director, and all of the sudden I hear Isaac sobbing. And I'm thinking, "I don't think he's upset? I think he's happy." Finally I said, "Isaac, what's going on?" He looked up at me and he said, "The dream of my life just came true."

TRIBECA: Is he going to come to Tribeca?

TRAVIS FINE: He is. When he looks in the mirror, he sees Justin Bieber. That's just his spirit inside. On



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the set, he was just a great listener, and he took direction. He's warm and goofy and silly, and I worked very hard on getting him to create this character. At a certain point I said to Alan and Garret, "You guys are screwed. [laughs] Every time he's on the screen, you guys are going to be great, but the audience will be in love with this kid."

TRIBECA: So you recreated LA in the late 70s and early 80s. How tough was that? The haircuts and costumes? And I loved the music. Any plans for a soundtrack?

TRAVIS FINE: P.J. Bloom, our music supervisor, does [GLEE](#) and all of [Ryan Murphy](#)'s projects. He is very well respected in the music supervision world. And because this is probably his one shot to do a job with his dad, he really put a lot of his heart and his soul in. So he really stretched; he was very smart about reaching for a couple of the hits. The Thelma Houston, "Don't Leave Me This Way," we knew we wanted to have as a centerpiece, and I was really passionate about the Dylan song at the end. So yes, PJ very much wants to do a soundtrack. I think there's some great stuff there, including Alan's three originals, which we took into the recording studio.

TRIBECA: I look forward to that. So what about recreating LA in the 70s?

TRAVIS FINE: Recreating LA in the 70s was tough because when you're working with very limited funds, you have to allocate and be smart about where you spend. At the end of the day, I still wish I could have opened the film up a little bit more. I'd love to have some shots of a block of Hollywood Boulevard, with cars and people walking. There are those things that, as a filmmaker, you just have to sacrifice.



TRIBECA: What do you want audiences to take away from the story? How much has changed, or hasn't changed, in 30 years? Were you trying to make a case for something that still isn't, necessarily, rectified in some places?

TRAVIS FINE: Whether you're dealing with religious issues, sexuality issues, or nationality issues, there are children in the world who need love, and there are people in the world who have love to give. And that's the only issue I have. People should be allowed to freely love each other.

In my case, I'm dealing with parental alienation. I have lots of love to give and there are times when my love is being thwarted because of an agenda. So while this is a LGBT movie, and it has been embraced and welcomed by people who support gay adoption and equality for all, in my mind, this story has more to offer than just a quote-unquote gay story. I tried to make something that spoke to a certain issue—

TRIBECA: The personal becomes universal.

TRAVIS FINE: Yes. Two of our executive producers, [Dan Skahen](#) and [Wayne LaRue Smith](#)—they're partners who live in Florida—spent about five years fighting the state for the right to legally be called the "parents" of the children that they had been caring for already. These are guys who have fostered 33 children. They've been together for a long, long time, and I don't care what they choose to do in the privacy of their own bedroom. When it comes to stability and what they give back to the world? These are good people who have clearly helped a lot of children who were thwarted for a long time.

So have things changed? Yes, in some places and in some ways. But not enough. I understand what it means to not be able to reach out and put your arms around your kid when you want to just hold them.

TRIBECA: Switching gears, if you could have dinner with any filmmaker alive or dead, who would it be?

TRAVIS FINE: I'd have to say [Scorsese](#). I love the level at which he's making films now and his knowledge. I'd love to just pick his brain.

TRIBECA: What's your favorite New York movie?

TRAVIS FINE: I'd have to say [ANNIE HALL](#). Although I do love [HANNAH AND HER SISTERS](#) as well. You know, [Woody Allen](#): he's New York. He is.

Tribeca: What would your biopic be called?

TRAVIS FINE: I'd call it **IT'S NEVER TOO LATE**. When I decided to come back to filmmaking, I was in Park City, and I saw a sticker that said, "It's never too late to become what you were supposed to have been." And I turned to my wife and I said, "I'm making another movie." And she said, "What?" And I said, "I know what I'm supposed to do."



*Travis Fine left a successful acting career in 2001 and became an airline pilot. While flying a commercial jet, Travis began to develop the story that became his first feature film, **THE SPACE BETWEEN**, which premiered at TFF in 2010 and aired on the USA Network on the 10th anniversary of 9/11.*

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It was an honor to be a part of this awesome project and to watch Travis work. He's a producer and actor's dream director and Brian Quattrini (my partner) and I are very proud to be screening at TriBeCa!

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