# Joaquin Phoenix exits Todd Haynes' gay drama just before filming



In a twist that’s sending ripples through both the Hollywood and LGBTQ+ communities, Oscar-winning actor Joaquin Phoenix has unexpectedly withdrawn from an upcoming gay drama directed by the highly esteemed Todd Haynes. Reports from Indiewire, Variety, and Deadline indicate that Phoenix's sudden departure occurred just five days before filming was set to commence, plunging the production into a state of uncertainty.

Phoenix was slated to star alongside Danny Ramirez, known for his role in "Top Gun: Maverick," in an evocative love story set in the 1930s. The narrative, rich with explicit sexual content, aimed to push boundaries and achieve the controversial NC-17 rating, marking it as a film poised to explore bold and provocative subjects.

Todd Haynes, who has continually impressed cultured and cosmopolitan audiences, particularly in the LGBTQ+ sphere, had been vocal about the unconventional and challenging nature of his latest project. In an interview with Variety, he reminisced: "What was so remarkable is that it all started with Joaquin having some ideas, some thoughts, and just questions and images. He came to me and said, 'Does this connect to you at all?' And I was like, 'Yeah, this is really interesting.'"

Phoenix, known for his fearless performances and advocacy for artistic integrity, reportedly pushed the envelope regarding the film's explicit sexual content. Haynes lauded Phoenix for his readiness to delve into "more dangerous territory, sexually."

The production, which was to be overseen by Haynes's longtime collaborator Christine Vachon, now finds itself in limbo. Crew members based in Mexico are currently awaiting payment as the film's fate teeters on the edge. As of now, no plans have been made to recast Phoenix’s role or to proceed with the scheduled filming.

While this drama continues to unfold, Todd Haynes is already shifting gears to another ambitious project. He is set to adapt Hernan Diaz’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "Trust" into a series for HBO. This project promises a reunion between Haynes and actress Kate Winslet, who previously collaborated on his celebrated 2011 miniseries "Mildred Pierce."

Joaquin Phoenix, ever a dynamic presence in the cinematic realm, remains active. He recently completed filming "Napoleon," directed by Ridley Scott, and wrapped "Eddington," a new venture with "Beau Is Afraid" director Ari Aster, featuring Emma Stone. Additionally, his eagerly awaited sequel to the blockbuster "Joker" is poised to premiere at the Venice Film Festival next month.