

HERO

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Little does Bernie know that fate will soon force him to disassociate with his spineless character and perform an act of bravery and what some people might call stupidity. His opportunity appears in the form of a crashing airplane that just happens to fall to earth less than twenty yards in front of him. Reluctantly, Bernie trudges through a muddy pond and opens the jammed escape hatch, saving the panicked passengers from their certain doom.

Bernie, thinking he's done his good deed for the year, finds himself walking away from the carnal wreckage, but is soon distracted by a little boy asking for someone to save his dad who he thinks is still in the plane. Bernie tries to convince the kid to let the pros take care of it, but the boy persists and finally pleads, "Please sir. Find my dad." Even the anti-christ would have a difficult time saying no to this kid.

Bernie is unable to find the father in the smoky confusion (we later find out he wasn't stuck in the plane at all), but is able to save a few of the other passengers, including a half-conscious television news reporter named Gale Gayley (Geena Davis). Thinking he failed in saving the kid's pop, he slithers out of the scene unnoticed.

However, Bernie's small slip-up in personal ethics ends up to be international news when Gale, who's been in desperate need of a "noble" and "inspirational" story, sensationalizes him into a mystery hero: "The Angel of Flight 104." Her network even comes up with a million dollar reward if the "mystery guy" agrees to come forward and give an interview.



Courtesy Photo
News reporter Gale Gayley (Geena Davis) manhandles Bernie LaPlante (Dustin Hoffman) through a crowd in the new comedy Hero.

Bernie finally finds out about the reward when it's too late; he gets arrested seconds after he hears about it on TV. In jail Bernie is forced to see another person come forward to collect the dough.

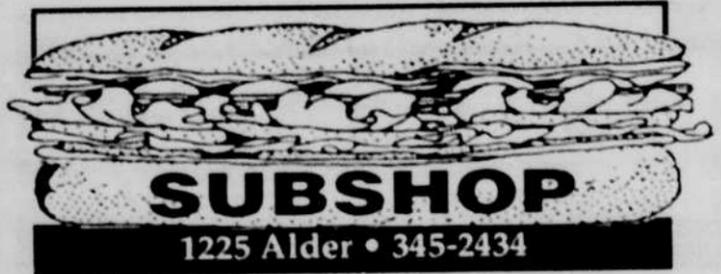
The fake hero is a homeless man by the name of John Bubber (Andy Garcia). Bernie hitched a ride from John directly after the plane crash and told him the whole insane story. Little did he know how sane the tale really was. John decides that the money would be more useful to him because he could use the cash to help his fellow transients.

Ironically, John actually starts

to become the real hero to all of America because he is the symbol that they want. He is humble (for a good reason), and makes social comments urging people to help the homeless and other causes. He even visits a children's hospital and talks a coma patient to reawaken. The man is a genuine inspiration to all.

But because John is truly a virtuous man, he feels inner torment for living a lie. At one point he has a marvelous opportunity to get the action on with Gale, but finds it unthinkable because he knows the truth.

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