

LEARN

FIGHT

LOVE

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF
HOW TO **SURVIVE** A PLAGUE

Peter Staley
Acts Up



PHOTO © Kerina Lovell

"ELECTRIFYING. A MAGNIFICENT DOCUMENTARY."

-CHUCK WILSON, LA WEEKLY

"REMARKABLE... AN EPIC CELEBRATION OF HEROISM AND TENACITY."

-DAVID ROONEY, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER



HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE

A FILM BY DAVID FRANCE

SUNDANCE SELECTS AND PUBLIC SQUARE FILMS PRESENT A FRANCE/TOMCHIN FILM IN ASSOCIATION WITH FORD FOUNDATION/JUSTFILMS, IMPACT PARTNERS AND LITTLE PUNK
"HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE" MUSIC SUPERVISION: THE RED HOT ORGANIZATION ORIGINAL SCORE BY STUART BOGIE & LUKE O'MALLEY FEATURING THE SONGS OF ARTHUR RUSSELL
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A LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

How to Survive a Plague bears witness. The film documents what I saw with my own eyes in those first long dark days of the worst plague in America – it shows both the tragedy and the brilliance leading up to 1996 when effective medication finally made it possible to think of HIV/AIDS as a chronic condition, like diabetes. I witnessed all this in my role as a journalist, not an activist. Instead of a bullhorn or placard, I carried a notepad and pen. There I am in the background of these frames. You can see brief glimpses of me nearly hidden in those crowds of activists, pressed against the walls of their meetings or counting their heads as police officers carted them off, trying to stay out of their way.

In fact, I spent the better part of ten years shadowing people like Peter Staley, Mark Harrington, Garance Franke-Ruta, and David Barr. Why? Because to me it was clear from early on that they were doing something that had never been done before in the history of health-care advocacy. Through the grassroots institutions they helped build, ACT UP and TAG, they invented a new kind of activism, one that has inspired generations since.

And at a time when so little progress was coming out of the halls of government and Pharma, I believed that if anybody was going to break the logjam and save lives it would be these guys – and that's exactly what happened.

Key to their success was an innovative approach they named "the inside-outside strategy."

On the "outside" stood the majority of activists in their ranks – shock troopers who could mobilize quickly and stage dramatic protests that garnered worldwide media coverage. Humor and ridicule were among their weapons, as were embarrassment and no small amount of audacity. They became the angry, hopeful, forceful face of the plague.

The goal of the "outside" ranks was to pry open the doors to the fortresses where decisions were being made – life-or-death decisions for anybody with an HIV infection – so that a small elite group of them could go "inside."

Back then, science was an Ivory Tower discipline removed from the real world of

ordinary people. It took up to a dozen years for a new drug to be tested and released. Even after the onset of the AIDS epidemic, with its grim prognosis of just 18 months, a hermetic sense of academic sluggishness prevailed. They knocked on doors at the NIH and FDA, then knocked them down when their pleas were not answered.

That's how the "inside" forces flooded in and demanded a place at the table for patients and their advocates in every aspect of medicine and science. Their task was daunting. In order to become full partners in the research, they had to become experts themselves. I watched Peter, Mark, Garance, David, and the others turn to textbooks and teach themselves the fundamentals of science – quizzing one another on the basics of immunology and virology, cellular biology and pharmaceutical chemistry.

They won their place at the table thanks to the activists who remained "outside," but earned respect for their opinions and suggestions on the "inside," and became equal partners in the arduous work that lay ahead. Together, they helped bring about the treatment revolution that made HIV survivable.

Millions of lives have been saved thanks to them. That's a daunting legacy to leave behind by any measure. It shows us that anything is possible – literally anything. Even the most disenfranchised people can change the world.

Their legacy also includes a powerful new model for social activism that is equally relevant today. Their change-making blueprint has been adopted by thousands of other health activists, from breast cancer to autism. Pro-democracy activists in Russia are studying their techniques, replicating their sensational street theater, and knocking on the doors of power themselves. LGBT rights campaigners in places like Albania and Greece are learning the lessons of ACT UP and TAG as they begin building new movements for social change.

For them, *"How to Survive a Plague"* does bear witness. And at the same time it shows how to survive anything. You do that by learning, and fighting, and loving.

David
September 18, 2012

LEARN

FIGHT

LOVE

Unleashing Your Power to Change the World: Lessons Learned from *How To Survive a Plague*

Activism is not a spectator sport.

The difference between those of us who watch the news and lament the problems of the world and those who get off the couch and actually do something is the difference between a passive citizenry and an active democracy. If you are reading this, chances are you're the type of person who gets off the couch.

Intention and engagement are not automatically linked. To affect meaningful social change, you have to be willing to dive headlong into the world's toughest problems and stick with them—especially when the going gets tough.

How to Survive a Plague tells the story of a small group of people known as the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) who fought successfully for medical remedies to a terrible pandemic. They exemplified the activist ethos: they convened, empowered themselves with information, harnessed their fury and worked together to address

one of the world's most difficult problems. They succeeded in securing scientific, political and economic solutions to HIV/AIDS.

Their story happened in particular places and times, notably New York's Greenwich Village and Washington, DC, in the early 1980s through the mid 1990s. While the AIDS movement was started by mostly gay white men, the HIV community quickly grew to include people of all genders, races and sexual orientations.

A diverse set of activists were bound by a common thread: their desire to respond to a mysterious disease targeting people in the prime of their lives. Three decades later, the community of people fighting the virus remains varied; however new HIV infections in the United States occur disproportionately among people of color.

In the early 1980's, little was known about HIV and how the virus spread. As a result, ignorance and fear drove the police who arrested ACT UP protesters to wear gloves. Even some health care workers were afraid to treat those living with HIV. At the time, there were no effective medications to prevent HIV infection from progressing to AIDS (which stands for "acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" and describes what happens when the replication of HIV in the body destroys a person's immune system leaving them susceptible to certain infections and cancers.)

Long before the Internet and email, cell phones and social media, ACT UP channeled the collective drive and talent of its several hundred members to challenge the seats of power controlling U.S. government budgets, federal and state policies, medical research, drug approval and global drug pricing. Their mission was singular: to keep people (including ACT UP members themselves and their lovers and partners and friends) from dying of AIDS.

ACT UP's efforts resulted in the accelerated development and approval of antiretroviral (ARV) HIV drugs that keep people living with the virus from developing AIDS. It has been recently shown that the same drugs that keep people with HIV healthy serve

simultaneously as prevention since they can help reduce the risk the virus will spread by up to 96%. Today, there are 33 ARVs for people with HIV.

Given that treatment is prevention, securing affordable, access to treatment for more people with HIV is not only good for individual health it is also good for public health. Real universal access to care for people with HIV protects their lives as well as the lives of those in the communities in which they live—and, in the case of mothers with HIV, those who live in their bodies. HIV medications can prevent the spread of HIV from a mother to her unborn child.

But despite the increased variety and greater affordability of antiretroviral HIV medications, too few people living with HIV can get them. Of the 34.2 million people estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS globally, a mere 8 million are currently accessing treatment. And of the 1.2 million Americans estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS—approximately 750,000 are not accessing treatment. This is partly because 1 in 5 people with HIV in the U.S. don't know their status. Another reason it's true is that AIDS remains the most stigmatized disease in human history. The stigma surrounding HIV prevents people from wanting to know their status and keeps people away from medical care. In the words of Dr. Paul Farmer, an early pioneer in the war on HIV, "As long as we have known about AIDS, blame and accusation have been prominent among the social responses." His book *AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame* focuses on the impact of AIDS in Haiti, and the particular way in which the virus became the ultimate "social disease" because of how people living with HIV can be ostracized, vilified, discriminated against and even physically harmed.

With so few people with HIV in care today, AIDS is anything but under control. That's why fighting for better prevention, treatment, medical care and human rights for people with HIV/AIDS is one of the most pressing health care justice issues of today.

Early AIDS activists worked to develop life-saving medicine. Today's AIDS activists are focused on getting more people globally linked to care and treatment—and pushing

for the development of better biomedical prevention tools, vaccines and the cure. If the first half of the battle against AIDS was about finding ways for people to survive at all, the second half is about finding ways for people to survive without having to take pills for the rest of their lives.

The heroism of AIDS activists in the face of death stands as an inspiration to a new generation of activists fighting for health care justice.

The story of how the early AIDS activists turned a diagnosis of being HIV-positive from an automatic death sentence into a treatable disease is evidence that the world's toughest problems can be mitigated when enough informed, empowered, dedicated people come together at the right times, in the right places, in the right ways.

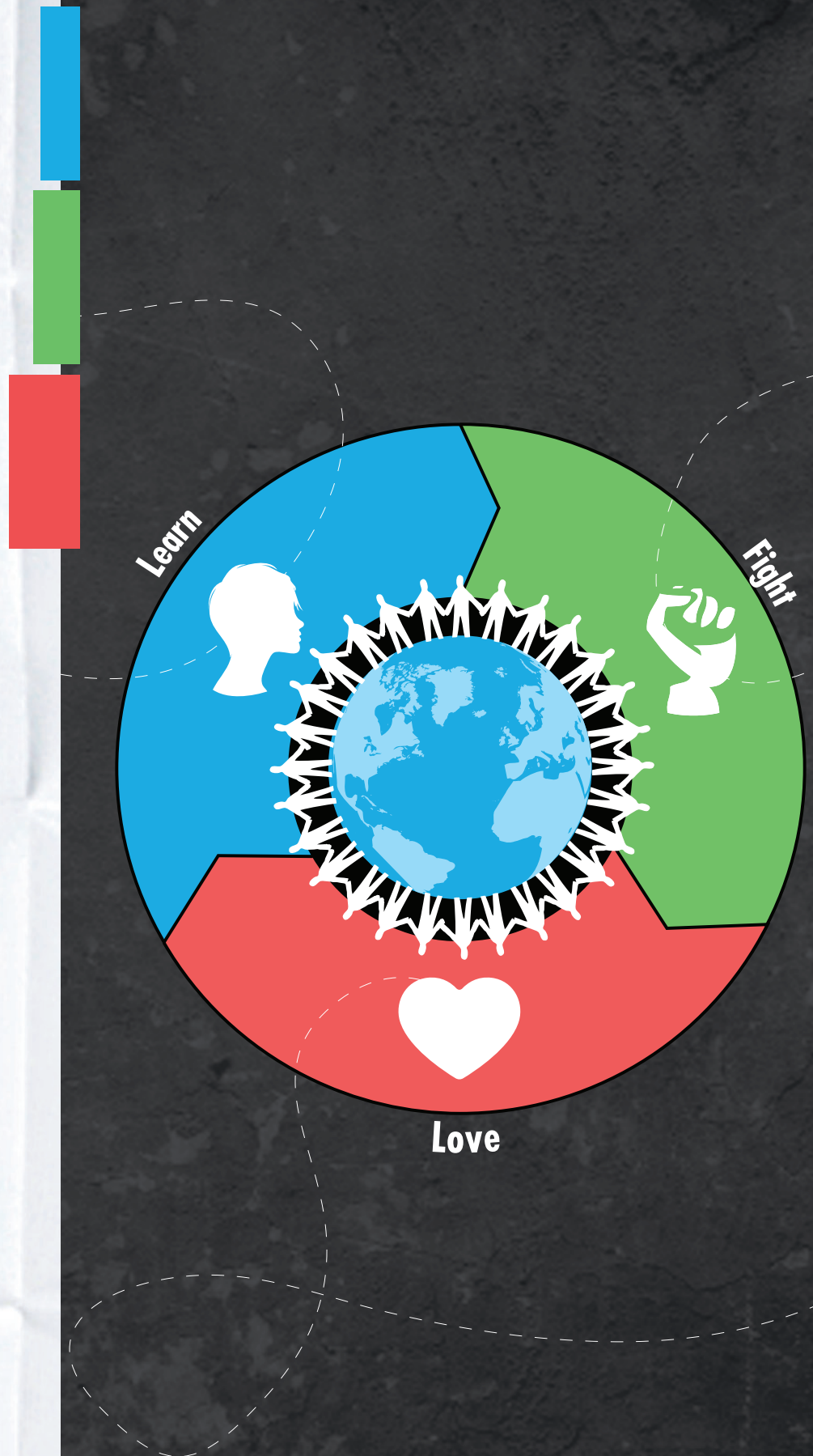
The strategies and tactics employed by ACT UP and other AIDS organizations and groups that fought with them offer a blueprint for all who want to change the world for the better, regardless of your mission or cause.

How do you fight a complex, deadly, and mysterious foe when those in power would prefer to ignore it? Three simple ways: You learn. You fight. You love.

Michael Manganiello, of HCM Strategists, and Margaret Anderson, of Faster Cures, summarized the work of AIDS activists in their piece "Back to Basics: HIV/AIDS Advocacy as a Model for Catalyzing Change" thus: "Change is possible. But in order to create change, the focused voices of advocates must be heard through the din. Individuals and organizations must do the hard work of becoming ready to question the status quo, and be smart enough to present well-founded alternatives. Strong leaders in government must pave the path and prepare to stay the course. Specific strategies with clear goals must be established in order to hold people accountable."

Social change leaders use their heads to become experts about their issue, and about the political and power dynamics that must be addressed to affect change.

They raise their fists to express that they are furiously angry.



34.2

million

the number of people globally estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS

33

the number of life-saving antiretroviral HIV/AIDS drugs (ARVs) available today

8

million

the number of people with HIV/AIDS currently accessing ARVs worldwide

26.2

million

the number of people with HIV/AIDS not accessing care worldwide

And they lead from their hearts, leveraging compassion to build coalitions, and practicing empathy by working along side people with whom they have fundamental differences.

No matter what cause—economic equality, health care justice, women’s reproductive rights, immigration reform, LGBTQ rights— is most important to you, if enough of you work together using your heads, hands and hearts, the collective force of your intelligence, power and passion can prove unstoppable.

“Change is possible. But in order to create change, the focused voices of advocates must be heard through the din. Individuals and organizations must do the hard work of becoming ready to question the status quo, and be smart enough to present well-founded alternatives. Strong leaders in government must pave the path and prepare to stay the course. Specific strategies with clear goals must be established in order to hold people accountable.”

BACK TO BASICS: HIV/AIDS Advocacy as A Model For Catalyzing Change – Michael Manganiello, HCM Strategists, and Margaret Anderson, Faster Cures.

Using the lens of HIV/AIDS activism, we explore the concept of “learn, fight, love” in detail to inspire you to greatness.



LEARN About the Issues and the Barriers to Change

For ACT UP, this meant harnessing the intellectual prowess of its members to develop collective expertise about HIV itself, the systems by which drugs are developed and approved, how to influence political leaders who set policies and budgets and how best to attract media attention.

Early AIDS activists became experts on the science of HIV and its treatment. Before they met with leaders at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or scientific research institutions, they did extensive homework. They knew as much, and sometimes more, about HIV/AIDS and the various components contributing to the pandemic than the people with whom they met. This meant they had maximum credibility when advocating for change. Being experts helped them secure seats at the tables where key decisions were being made.

Simply knowing what you want, such as better drugs, gender equity or a fair and transparent financial system, is never enough to effect social change.

In order to really change the world, you’ll need to:

Master the language of your issue or cause. To be taken seriously by leaders, you must be fluent in the terminology of the experts.

Understand the systems affecting your issue. Remember, barriers to change are sometimes the unintended consequences

of deep-seated bureaucracies; faulty, inefficient structures; ill-informed leaders or outdated laws or policies

Understand the power structure. It’s critical to know which individuals and organizations control decisions at each juncture. Getting the right people and organizations on your side can be as powerful as the largest public demonstrations

Know where the money is and who controls it. Being able to influence how funding is applied is key to any successful movement.



FIGHT for Health Care Justice

Anger is a key driver for activists. It fuels some people to greater levels of risk taking. Many of the people who have changed the world were indignant enough to show up, stand up, push back and fight back. Legendary AIDS activist Larry Kramer, a founder of ACT UP said, “We were fighting for our lives and for our friends who were there with us who were dying like flies all around us, so we were motivated.”

Even those who took passive paths of activism, such as Gandhi, were often driven by an inner fury and deep-seated passion for their cause.

AIDS activists were so impactful because they fought hard, and visibly, in the public eye and in the press. They took to the streets, they made art, they made noise and ultimately, they made a difference.

1.2

million

the number of Americans estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS

750,000

the number of Americans with HIV/AIDS not accessing ARVs

41

percent

of working age Americans either have medical bill problems/ medical debt

52

million

the number of Americans without health insurance as of 2009

1 out of 6

the number of Americans on Medicaid, the government subsidized program for low income people

Their weapons included clearly articulated demands, arresting graphics, memorable and often shocking slogans—and courage. Many who fought to change the way the world treats people living with HIV have been imprisoned. More than once.

They were also laser-focused in their mission: whether storming the halls of power with banners and bullhorns or meeting with researchers, doctors, drug developers, funders, members of Congress or the United States government, they never deviated from their fundamental objective of securing life-sustaining drugs for all with HIV in need.

And, finally, AIDS activists were relentless. They never took no for an answer. They made sure that their voices were heard, and they stuck to a plan. A self-trained army for health care justice, when forced to retreat, they regrouped and went back to fight another day.

dictatorship of President Ben Ali, and publicly humiliated as they brazenly took him from his cart. Rebuffed by local authorities when he sought retribution, Bouazizi saw no opportunity, no hope of change. In protest against the leadership of his country, he self-immolated in the central square for all to see. News of his death in January of 2011 spread quickly across social media and ignited a movement that soon became known as “the Arab Spring”—a series of rebellions in nations throughout the Middle East aimed at over turning governments.

History is full of examples of individuals who catalyzed movements from Susan B. Anthony to Nelson Mandela, Vaclav Havel to Rosa Parks. Some made a career of change; others responded to a moment of choice in a way that changed everything. But each was part of a movement that included a community. None of them acted alone.

Positive social change can start with one person. But it gathers momentum and has potential for real impact when individuals come together, share their vision and create a community. Those who have altered the world came together with others of different backgrounds and beliefs and worked together to a common end.

The strong sense of community and shared responsibility witnessed in *How to Survive a Plague* was instrumental in sustaining a decade-long fight for life-saving drugs. Love—for themselves, for each other and for life—gave AIDS activists the strength to persevere and triumph.

The *How to Survive a Plague* team hopes that by telling the story of AIDS as one of heroes fighting successfully for change, a new generation of activists and supporters will be inspired to join in the fight. Working with leading activist organizations—in a coalition called the “Learn, Fight, Love Alliance”—the *How to Survive a Plague* team is organizing post-screening ‘meet-ups’ to help budding activists connect and commence heir journeys. They will be formed on-line and take place in various locations across the country. The Black AIDS Institute, Health GAP, HIV Prevention Justice Alliance and Student Global AIDS Campaign are leading the charge, but all organizations that would like to host “meet-ups” are welcome to participate.

To learn how you can get involved in changing the world by aligning yourself with the organizations working to create positive impact in conjunction with this film, visit surviveaplague.com

Another way you can show some love is to “pay it forward.” To demonstrate our love for the next generation, the *How to Survive a Plague* team has developed a “Tickets for Youth” Initiative that enables anyone to donate to underwrite free tickets for students (and others) those who can’t afford movie tickets.

So join the fight to end AIDS by fighting for health care justice for all at surviveaplague.com. And don’t forget: learn, fight, love!



LOVE by
Connecting with
Communities

Many of us who are considering getting involved in social change wonder whether individual actions can really have an impact. The answer is unequivocally, yes.

Consider the actions of a young fruit seller named Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia who was accosted by police officers emboldened by the corrupt

ACTIVISM THEN & NOW

Legendary AIDS Activist Peter Staley Talks With Newly-Minted Fighter for Human and Health Care Rights Michael Tikili of Queerocracy and Health GAP About What it Takes To Be An Effective Change Agent — and How Yesterday's Lessons Apply Today

Michael Tikili: How did you become an AIDS activist?

Peter Staley: My primary motivation was finding out I was HIV-positive in late 1985. It was a very frightening time. I was deeply closeted and working as a bond trader on Wall Street. The Rock Hudson news had just hit, the country was in a panic and there were no drugs [to save people from AIDS]. A diagnosis of HIV was considered a very quick death sentence. I did a few things like telling my family trying to build a support network but I was desperate to find some treatments that might save me. As I looked into it more, I realized the government wasn't doing anything. My frustration began to build and about a year and a half later, ACT UP was born. I passed their very first demonstration on my way to work one morning and decided I had to be a part of it. There was about a year overlap while I continued to work on Wall Street and went to ACT UP meetings at night. I stayed in the closet at work. It was a double life I couldn't really sustain. My CD4 cells crashed and that kind of forced the issue. I went on disability right before ACT UP's one-year anniversary in 1988 and came out as a full fledged AIDS activist in a major way in their first anniversary demo where I got arrested and appeared on the local news channel. That was it.

MT: Was it difficult to integrate activism into your life while you were still on Wall Street?

PS: It was hard. Mostly because of how difficult it is to maintain some sort of closet. I had three closets: I was hiding my sexuality, the fact that I was HIV-positive and the fact that I was an activist. I wasn't going to very many demonstrations because I was afraid of getting caught on a TV news show or appearing in a photo. So I became head of ACT UP's fundraising committee. That allowed me to be involved without threatening those closets. But it was a real juggling act. And very emotionally draining. Ultimately, something had to give. So I left Wall Street and went on disability. The disability checks allowed me to work as a full time volunteer activist for ACT UP and activism became my entire life. I flourished once I did that. Life was just much easier. I

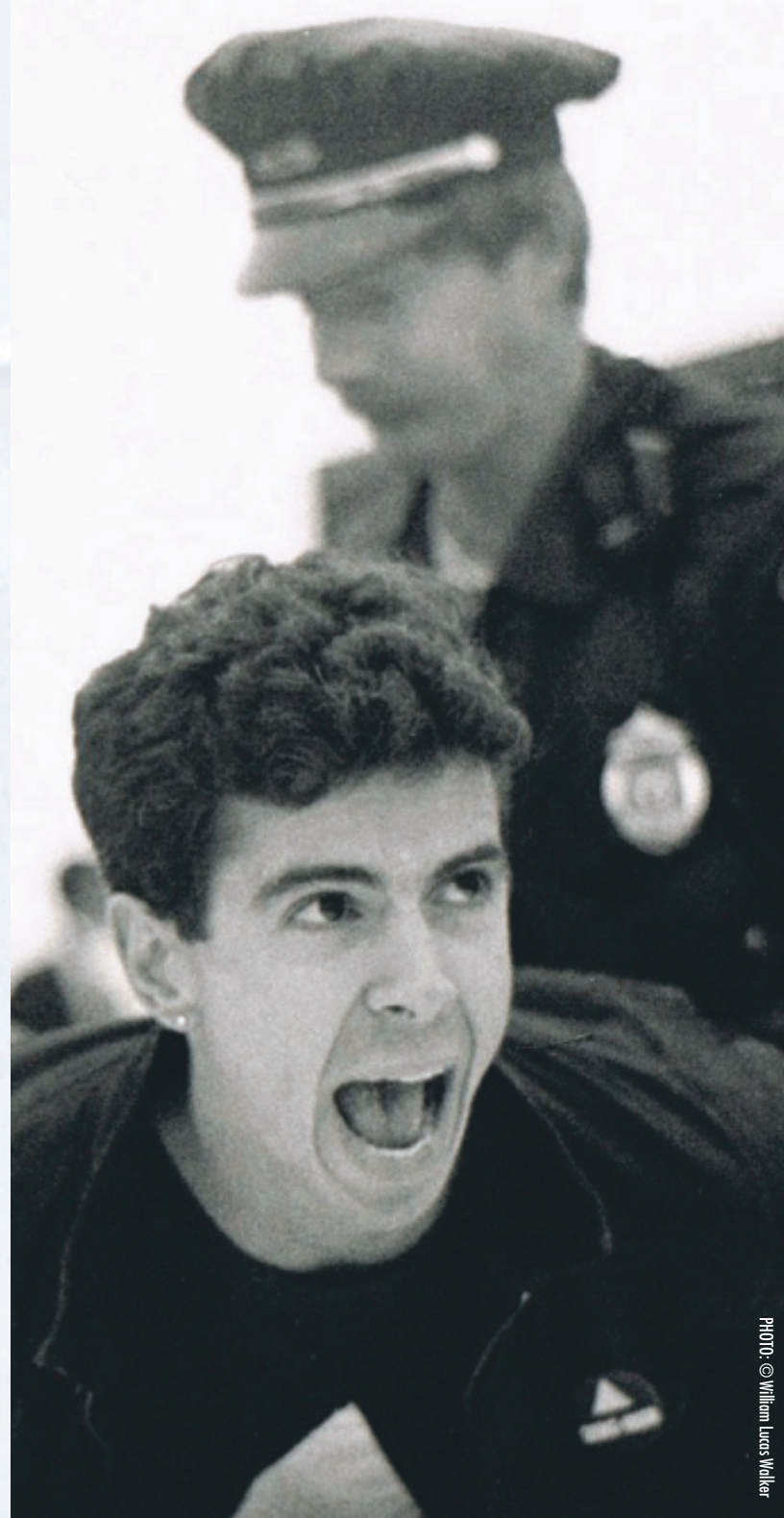


PHOTO: © William Lucas Walker

probably wouldn't have flourished if I didn't have that financial lifeline of a disability check. Back then, for people with HIV, it was much easier to get those. All you had to do was say "I'm HIV positive" and the government would say, "Fine, here's your check." They've since gotten more picky but back then they thought you were going to be dead in two years so they paid ya.

PS: So...how did you get become an activist?

MT: Activism just sort of happened naturally for me. When I moved back to New York after grad school I was searching for community and I was chasing after all the queer kids (the cool ones at least) and I started getting involved in Queerocracy where I was introduced



to social justice causes and eventually came across Health GAP. I was really excited because Health GAP was doing something that I was passionate about. I was always passionate about HIV/AIDS, particularly on the global level, and [I was interested in combating] how the lack of treatment access was [hurting] people in the developing south. Particularly because I still have family in West Africa. An organization that helped others in another country resonated with my personal beliefs. So I jumped on board and haven't stopped since.

PS: How did your friends and family react to your activism?

MT: When I was first arrested, a lot of my close family freaked out.

I think because I am a black male and the idea of getting arrested doesn't sit well [with our community]. After my arrest, when I was trying to raise money for jail support and a lawyer, people were not that supportive. I think they felt if I was going to jail for a cause, money should already be there [to help me]. But the organizations I was working with didn't have massive amounts of money waiting to back us up. In the beginning, people thought I was kind of crazy. But once I started showing up in newspapers and on TV, people started supporting me and sending me texts, saying things like, "I just saw you on TV, good job!" People are more supportive now that they understand what I'm doing.

PS: I found the same thing. Once you have that media attention and it's generally a positive story about the issue you're fighting for, it usually tends to impress family and friends and they get behind you. There can be some nerves if they know about this stuff before it happens. I once had a boyfriend, Kevin Sessums, who freaked out when I told him about the plan I was working on to put that giant condom over Jesse Helms' house. He thought you couldn't do that to a U.S. Senator and worried I was going to end up in jail for 20 years. He went to one of his best friends, David Geffen, and cried on his shoulder. Geffen actually sided with me and said, "Kevin, this is who Peter is and this is what activism is and you've got to support him in this and trust that he knows what he's doing." I was having trouble raising the money to actually get this condom built because it was huge...it had to go over a two-story house. To my surprise, David Geffen paid for it. He handed me a giant wad of cash—\$3,500—and said, "Don't ever tell anybody I paid for this." But 25 years later, the story's gotten out and he doesn't seem to mind.

MT: How critical is the role of good press to the impact of activism?

PS: In a way, it's all about the press. If you do an action and there's no press it's like the question of whether a tree falling in the woods makes a sound if there's no one there to hear it fall. I think it's important to get good media coverage and an action is a failure when it doesn't. There are some benefits to the activists themselves for just having built up the courage to carry out an action and actually pulling it off. But from a movement perspective and in terms of [the impact] on the issue you're fighting for, the press is essential to really help the cause. I try to always be mindful of that and ask, "Am I doing this action just for myself or will this really help the movement?" I think you should only pull the trigger if you've got some high degree of confidence that the latter is true. It can become dispiriting to do a series of actions that don't end up registering [with the wider world]. Have you found that? I know you're having real frustrations with trying to birddog the presidential candidates...specifically Romney...mostly because they're spotting you now.

MT: That's the downside of the fact that there aren't that many people doing what we do at this moment. I think it also has to do with the fact that I'm a person of color so it's easy to remember my face and I stand out in these crowds as sort of a red flag. A few weeks ago we were trying to infiltrate a Republican national rally in New Hampshire and I was the only male of color in a crowd of I don't know how many hundreds. I don't let it bother me. If my action happens...I'm satisfied. Now, I'm not afraid to get arrested. Speaking of that, what was your first arrest like?



PS: My first arrest was at ACT UP's first anniversary demo. It involved affinity groups, which are small groups of activists all agreeing to get arrested together. Wave after wave of them just sat down and blocked traffic at the corner of Broadway and Wall [streets]. I joined one of the first waves. I had just left my job and come out as HIV-positive to my colleagues in the bond market. I was biting at the bit, ready to do it. I was very eager and excited. There was so much energy that day and well over a hundred arrests. There was camaraderie and a loud crescendo. To be surrounded by that kind of energy made it so much easier and thrilling. It really helps to have a larger community behind you and to have a well-organized action with lawyers on standby and volunteers at every police station working on your release, waiting for you to be released. What I most remember fondly was our time in jail. There were dozens and dozens of gay men and lesbians poking fun at the cops and whistling at them when they walked by our cells. We started singing camp theater songs together. It was just a blast. I have very fond memories of my first arrest. How about you?

MT: I'd always been afraid of getting arrested because as I was growing up it was nailed into my head that I should avoid getting arrested and not become a statistic and having a record like many men of color. So the idea of being arrested for my career was unsettling at first but it does make a difference when you're being arrested with friends. That's why affinity groups are so useful. We need to work on bringing those back by the way...My first arrest was really cush. It was in upstate New York and we were protesting budget cuts. We shut down the Capitol by blocking all the entrances. It was a beautiful arrest. They took us in and we all hung out in a little conference room together playing cards and shooting the breeze.

PS: Sounds like we both had really nice first arrests to set us off...How many times have you been arrested now?

MT: It is hard to keep track. I think around

six. How about yourself?

PS: Ten. Exactly ten. And because of the amazing lawyers ACT UP always had I don't have a record, which is very cool. When I got arrested back in the day I was doing it as part of this huge organization and at a moment in time when the gay community rose up in unison and was all taking part in it. These days, activism is conducted in a very different social context. In many ways it's a harder if you don't have an entire community behind you and participating at the same time. How do you feel about your generation and the willingness of people your age to participate in [modern] social movements?

MT: Once, getting arrested was sort of a badge of honor and people respected you for it. Now, there's such tension between police and all protestors, especially in New York City. I think because of that, a lot more people aren't as willing be arrested because you don't know how you're going to be treated in jail or how long you're going to be in there. Most social justice movements have slowly come under the Occupy umbrella whether or not their issue can be linked to Wall Street. I think it's harder in general today for people to be activists.

PS: You're so right. With the current economy and people struggling for work there's a lot on everybody's plate. That doesn't mean they don't care about the world. Today's activists don't have the advantage of what really fed ACT UP—people watching their lovers and friends dying all around them. That was a huge motivating force. It's a lot harder to build movements and community today. My generation needs to cut yours a break in that regard, but it doesn't get any of us off the hook. How does Queerocracy try to expand its base in this environment?

MT: We go after anyone who is queer and tell them they should be doing more than just going to gay bars. It usually works. I'm pretty convincing at times. I'm starting to believe I have a knack for it. It's different to answer that question for the AIDS movement. I feel

a lot of the people who contribute to the HIV movement are concentrated in AIDS service organizations that already have an agenda that's, I won't say controlling, but directing where and how individuals get involved. There's no one specific direction that any group of AIDS organizations are taking [that's unified]. It would be very hard in this landscape to get everyone on the same page.

PS: It is harder to get everybody into the same room these days, but I think it's essential. That goes to a question I have about the Internet and social media—two things your generation has today that we didn't have in ACT UP. How do those things fit into movements and how helpful are they?

MT: I love and swear by social media. [Learning to wield it well] is a right of passage for a modern activist. In this day and age, your movement can't survive without social media. I was trained that bringing people to actions is all about calling people three times. But today, a lot of people rely on Facebook to disseminate information about what is going on. And [Twitter] has huge impact. Tweeting at people allows you to interact with people who are nowhere close to you. Anyone is accessible. You'd be really surprised by what a single tweet can do, especially a celebrity tweet since many celebrities are being followed by millions of people. You have to get to their publicist. Activists right now are using social media to grow their movements.

PS: I agree. Social media is a great outreach and recruitment tool and a good way to influence friends and wider circles of people about the issues they should be caring about. It can serve as a way to almost bypass having to get press stories about certain actions. If you're savvy enough and you film your own civil disobedience or have somebody film it for you, you can get it up on YouTube in seconds and it starts getting tweeted around and getting posted on Facebook [and the word spreads]. I don't think it reaches the largest possible audience and it often ends up just preaching to the converted. But it still is a great way to get your action out there and inspire those who are on your side. The one problem I see with social media is that the Internet hasn't yet figure out how to replace a group coming together in room and strategizing about what to do. Asking: What should be our next action? Our next demo? And hashing it out. Chat rooms can't really do that effectively or fast enough. There is just nothing like a group of people in a room picking over an idea and riding the emotional rollercoaster created when something sparks in somebody's head, they think "This might be a great idea," they raise their hand, they give an impassioned speech and instantaneously, the room comes alive and people are like "Yes! That's what we could do." And someone else chimes in with "And we could do this on

top of it" and it's an explosion of energy and creativity. I have yet to find anything on the Internet that can recreate those moments. You always need to have that central place where individuals can come together face-to-face and strategize and feed off each other's emotions and creativity.

MT: Yes. It also builds a sense of unity [to come together in person]. I've been to actions where I didn't know anyone and I felt isolated among a crowd of thousands. I want to echo your sentiment about how important it is to get in a room and build a sense of camaraderie with the people you're about to do an action with and you can't get that from the Internet.

PS: How do you galvanize today's youth to become involved in activism, especially AIDS activism?

MT: I cater my messages to my audience. If I'm talking to a younger audience, I'll highlight the fact that HIV/AIDS is not over and that the rates are still high and that we need advocacy to let people know that we're still at risk and to keep them safe. It's good to tailor your messages as specifically as possible. For example, if you're talking to women, emphasize the importance of the need for maternal care for women with HIV. One in four women who die worldwide die of HIV-related causes. It's really important to mention something that will resonate specifically.

PS: It always helps to show our friends and younger audience examples of how activism can actually change the world. I think there is a lot of cynicism out there these days about being able to do that especially with our political system the way it is. But it's happened through history. When I first got involved in ACT UP somebody said I had to see the documentary *The Times of Harvey Milk*. It just blew my mind when I watched that and saw this entire California-based community be able to beat back a vile referendum that was being voted on statewide that would prevent gay people from being teachers. Just to see that activism and how it led to gay people being able to teach really empowered my activism by showing that people power can change things. That's my hope for the new film coming out, *How to Survive a Plague*, about the AIDS activism that me and many of my friends participated in in the late '80s and '90s. Activism is hard. Whenever I'm asked how can we encourage people to become activists, I find it a very difficult question because within ACT UP we didn't do much outreach. We didn't drag people in. People were kicking down our doors and flooding in on their own. The drive to be an activist has to come from within. This work is not easy. And the change doesn't happen overnight. Hopefully, reminding people that change can happen will be enough of a spark to get them engaged.

MAKING THEIR MARK

Four young activists focused on social and health care justice share what drives them to try to change the world — for the better



Org(s) with which you advocate: HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA; countdowntoaids2012.org) and U.S. Positive Women's Network (Twitter: @USPWN)

Why you do what you do: It's important as young

people that we learn from our elders and come together to combat this epidemic. When I was infected, I was extremely undereducated about what it means to be HIV-positive today. I believed that HIV was a death sentence, and it was only through learning more about the virus and myself that I found the strength to share my own story. If my speaking out and being honest about my experiences can help another young person remain HIV-negative, then it's worthwhile. I'm blessed to have a strong support network that helps me to stand up and advocate for other HIV-positive transgender people. I use my voice to advocate for my community.

The most powerful lesson you have learned from the work of ACT UP is: To persevere and keep talking about HIV. The straight forward messages ACT UP brought us, like SILENCE = DEATH, were incredibly impactful on my own activism. I firmly believe that if we don't keep talking about HIV/AIDS, we will continue to have people die from the virus. For me, that idea expands to include [conversations about] gender identity and sexuality because if we don't talk about our sexuality, our gender, and the very core of who we are in an honest and open way, society will continue to devalue the lives of people in our communities.

The biggest issue you are fighting for is: The inclusion and rights of HIV-positive transwomen. I think the transgender community, as a whole, has made great strides in the past decade in increasing its visibility and the understanding society has of trans people, but there is still a lack of discussion around HIV and the transwomen's community in the media and the broader society. If we want to combat this disease in all communities, there needs to be more people with HIV who will speak out about their experiences and how discrimination and stigma augment the challenges inherent to being a transwoman in 21st century America.

Traditional media that matters most to you: Film and television. As a child of the '80s, I grew up with TV and movies that offered a lot of strong, positive messages around building a sense of identity. But these messages never included any representation by the queer community, especially transgender people. Nowadays, there is so much more visibility of trans people on TV and in the movies that public perception of trans people is changing. However, there is so much less focus in film and on TV about HIV than I would like to see. The visual media is the way young people, like myself, are most able to relate to the world around them.



Amirah Sequeira



Robert Suttle

NAME: DEVARAH ("DEE") BORREGO



Dee Borrego



Jeremich Johnson

Social media has changed activism by... Making it easier to reach populations, like the trans community, which are often very isolated geographically. Social media brings people together who might otherwise feel completely alone. Social media campaigns have a lot of power to sway public opinion on important matters, like equality for transgender and gay people and the need to protect oneself from HIV. Connecting with others in a multitude of ways is powerful in that it lets us show that being HIV-positive or transgender is not something to be feared, hated or criminalized.

You will feel most successful when... I know that prejudice against HIV-positive and transgender people is over. Many young people today are being exposed to information about transgender and HIV-positive people, and I hope someday that society will be completely accepting of all people, regardless of their HIV-

status or gender identity. I pray that someday the murders and violence against trans people and HIV-positive people won't happen with the regularity that they do now and that no one will be discriminated against or killed for being who they are. The biggest success for me would be the elimination of the HIV criminalization laws across our nation, and further legislation that protects the rights of the transgender community and systems that allow trans people equitable treatment under the law.



NAME: JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Org(s) with which you advocate: UNAIDS (unaids.org) and Columbia University

Why you do what you do: Since finding out I was HIV-positive in 2008, I have become all too familiar with the injustices faced by people living

with HIV. The stigma surrounding the virus is debilitating, and it continues to unjustly destroy the lives of HIV positive individuals. At the time of my diagnosis, I was serving as a volunteer in the Peace Corps in Ukraine. Despite my best efforts to finish my service, I was kicked out because of my HIV status and forced to return home early. Thanks to the help of the ACLU, I was able to get the Peace Corps to change their discriminatory policy and allow HIV positive volunteers to continue their service. The outcome was certainly gratifying. However, I have found that behind each victory against stigma and discrimination looms more of the same that we must continue to combat. While working at the Northern Colorado AIDS Project as a case manager and prevention specialist I met clients who told me that their doctors were afraid to touch them. I saw an individual die because they were too afraid to seek treatment after they tested positive. I saw many individuals' lives in constant crisis because they didn't have access to the mental healthcare they need to address their own internalized stigma. I continue to do this work because, while many in America have begun to see HIV/AIDS as less of a priority, I see [AIDS awareness] as a job that is far from complete. It is my job to talk with as many people as I can to keep the discussion of [the need to remove] stigma alive and to remind everyone that this battle is far from over.

The most powerful lesson you have learned from the work of ACT UP is...that silence really does equal death. I have never been one to shout too loud or make a spectacle, but seeing the tremendous bravery of early AIDS activists, even in the face of insurmountable odds, is profoundly inspiring. It is thanks to their example that I, even from the start of my diagnosis, have known that I had to keep talking to people about my status and about my experience as a young gay man living with HIV. It doesn't matter whether I'm speaking one-on-one with my family and friends, voicing support for other individuals living with HIV, or standing in front of a

group and shouting at the injustice that exists for people living with HIV (PLHIV). The important thing is to never suffer in silence.

The biggest issue you are fighting for is...the destigmatization and decriminalization of HIV/AIDS. Since becoming infected, I've had many discussions about why so many young MSM continue to contract HIV. Condom fatigue, "bug chasing," and the psychological impact of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) on people's willingness to practice safer sex are often cited as possible reasons for the rising incidence of new infections. In general, these explanations blame the individuals who get infected. It's as though young MSM take the good messages and resources that society gives them and twist them into some sort of justification for at-risk behaviors. But what about society's ongoing failures [to educate people and link them to care]? Certainly, there is a personal responsibility to protect oneself and others from getting infected, but one's ability to do so is severely compromised when an individual does not have the support they need to make decisions to protect their individual health. In most of America it is still not safe to be openly gay or HIV-positive. Talking openly to others about your sexual orientation or challenges associated with practicing safer sex can lead to consequences ranging from shame and discomfort to legal problems. It is wonderful that there are more resources now for uninfected individuals to protect themselves and for PLHIV to not transmit the virus, but how good are those resources if stigma prevents people from accessing them? For me, it is important for us to continue to break down these barriers—like stigma— that are still fueling the epidemic.

Traditional media that matters most to you: As far back as I can remember, I have been enthralled by the magic of writing and the messages that can be conveyed through a good novel. While other forms of media are often more accessible and provide a necessary first glimpse into an important issue, the intimacy of a good book can transform someone's point of view on a more profound level. It's like spending hours in someone else's mind and getting to understand their reasoning.

Social media has changed activism by...making it more accessible to more people. However, it has, in some ways, lessened the personal nature of activism. There is no doubt that the petitions circulated on Change.org have power and do gather enough signatures to challenge the status quo. But activism is more than the click of a button. Often, in order to really change the opinions that oppress marginalized groups, discussions must be had. We have to be brave enough to step away from our computer screens and talk about HIV/AIDS with the people in our lives and with our leaders in society.

You will feel successful when you... and others living with HIV no longer have to fear coming out about our HIV status. This seems so far off in so many ways, but there is no reason that it can't happen. There is a lot of work to be done, however. Laws need to be changed both in the US and abroad so that the rights of PLHIV are no longer at risk. PLHIV need to feel empowered enough to talk to as many people as possible about their experience. And HIV/AIDS activists must continue to do whatever they can to raise funds and raise awareness to finish the work to end stigma and, ultimately, to end the epidemic



NAME: AMIRAH SEQUEIRA

Org(s) with which you advocate: Health GAP (heathgap.org) and Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC; studentglobalaidscampaign.org)

Why you do what you do: There is no reason why people should suffer when the tools and resources exist to provide them with the healthcare they need. No one should be denied that healthcare based on their gender, sexuality, race or geographical location. I do the work I do through SGAC because I believe the power of young people is magical. It really is! When we activate youth to work together and advocate effectively for what we need and want, we see results.

The most powerful lesson you have learned from the work of ACT UP is... ALWAYS speak truth to power when people are being marginalized. Strategic political activism and advocacy does change the world and save lives. NEVER be afraid to challenge authority.

The biggest issue you are fighting for is... The end of AIDS. Sound unrealistic? It's not.

Leaders you love? SGAC members, students and youth. They inspire me every day, and are such incredible leaders in this movement. Their devotion, fearlessness, and willingness to work together in grassroots activism is magnificent.

Traditional media that matters to you most: Books! I love to read, particularly to read history, and refuse to use/buy a kindle, e-books, etc. I also find a lot of my inspiration from archives—at newspapers, government or organizational archives. The New York City Municipal Government archives are a great place to find inspiration from incredible social movements that have taken place in NYC, as are the ACT UP archives in the New York Public Library. (Read through Mayor Koch and Dinkins papers in the city archives, particularly the department of health files. You'll see the impact that groups like ACT UP had on

the government and the way in which they were affecting change. Be prepared to get really angry though.)

Social media has changed activism by... allowing activists to write their own news and histories for the world to see, rather than relying on media outlets to tell their stories. The world can watch political moments and social movements unfold in real time, and calls to action can be instantly disseminated to reach millions of people globally. That said, while social media can help boost specific types of activism (petitions, letter/email writing campaigns, Twitter campaigns, etc), nothing replaces the power of thousands of people taking to the streets. Though I see the value of social media, my organizing has shown that traditional tactics—like calling people directly and showing up at events with a clipboard to collect names and numbers—works just as well, if not better, at getting people into the streets.

You will feel successful when you... when WE (the AIDS movement and the world) see zero new [HIV] infections and treatment provided on demand across the world.

Org(s) with which you advocate: The SERO Project (seroproject.org)

Why you do what you do: To whom much is given, much is required. I feel I have been given a second chance, after my conviction, to make [my life] count. I can't stand to see people suffer at the hands of injustice.

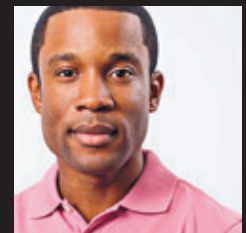
The most powerful lesson you have learned from the work of ACT UP is: To mobilize with passion and a pure sense of "we're in this fight for our lives together."

The biggest issue you are fighting for is... the repeal of HIV-specific statutes enforced across the United States. HIV is not a crime.

Traditional media that matters to you most: Music. I love gifted artists that write or sing meaningful songs that tell what it is people are going through, how they feel. I love the work of artists whose music touches our souls.

Social media has changed activism by... leaps and bounds. People are informed and engaged on situations and issues in real time, which allows communities and networks to mobilize into action.

You will feel successful when... I'm no longer registered as a sex offender in the U.S. and that HIV-specific laws will no longer be enforced to discriminate, stigmatize, prosecute or convict people living with HIV/AIDS.



NAME: ROBERT SUTTLE

HOW YOU CAN HELP END A PLAGUE

An invitation from the Learn Fight Love Alliance

The work of the members of ACT UP, TAG and others fighting HIV/AIDS from its earliest days paved a path to survival for millions of people living with the virus. They also prevented millions more from contracting it. But though much ground has been gained in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there is still much ground to cover to help all survive the plague.

What's different, and exciting, about where we are in the fight against AIDS now is that for the first time, people living with HIV, scientists, government leaders around the world and other policy-makers agree—we know how to stop this epidemic.

It's partly a question of securing truly universal access to care and treatment for all who need medicine. The same treatment that keeps people living with HIV from developing AIDS can also reduce the risk that HIV will spread. Of the more than 34 million people estimated to be living with HIV globally, currently about 28 million don't have access to life-sustaining antiretroviral drugs. There are about 750,000 Americans with HIV (most who know it, some who do not) not accessing the existing medicines that can spare their lives while slowing viral spread.

Lack of access to health care is not the only thing spreading HIV. Poverty, lack of housing, mass imprisonment, racism, homophobia and transphobia sexism, stigma, discrimination and criminalization are also fanning the fire.

Finally, the end of AIDS is also partly a question of making sure investments keep pace with research breakthroughs to herald in new scientific solutions. Exciting new breakthroughs have been made in scientific research, getting us closer to better biomedical prevention options, preventive and therapeutic vaccines and even the cure.

The brave leaders highlighted in *How to Survive a Plague* started the battle; today's generation can be the one that ends it. It is, for many, impossible to see *How to Survive a Plague* with considering how each of us can contribute personally to the end of AIDS.

The Learn Fight Love (LFL) Alliance unites key HIV/AIDS and health care justice advocates in the final fight against the AIDS pandemic. Using efficient and proven strategies to make change, the organizations that comprise the LFL Alliance are leading powerful efforts inspired by the early ACT UP leaders you have seen in *How to Survive a Plague*.

You can join the fight today by supporting one, several, or all of the partner organizations in the Alliance. Or, let the Alliance know what you and/or your organization is doing and the Alliance will support you. We'd love to share your stories about how you're fighting for justice. Tweet to #learnfightlove or email us at info@surviveaplague.com and we'll make sure to highlight your story in ways that inspire others. If you just want to be kept in the loop, register yourself and/or your organization at info@surviveaplague.com and indicate that you'd like to become a member of the LFL Alliance.

Since the days of the Stonewall Rebellion for LGBT liberation, a powerful and playful chant has challenged people to participate: "Out of the bars and into the streets!" Now, we invite you to join the legions of brave people who have fought and died for social and health care justice. It's time to get out of the theater and into the street!

To simplify what can seem like a complicated agenda of things that must be accomplished to the end of AIDS, we highlight four of the most important things today's activists—this means you!—can do to help end this plague once and for all.

1 ENSURE ALL PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

The Issue: Access to health care and treatment saves the lives of people with HIV. But it's also now recognized as key to ending the epidemic—as data from a study known as “HPTN-052” show that people who are able to get (and stay on) antiretroviral treatment for HIV are at little or no risk of passing on the virus. This means treatment doubles as prevention. It's the justification we've been waiting for to secure necessary policy changes and adequate budgets to ensure health care for all people with HIV—and for all people in general.

The Solution: In the domestic United States, the full implementation of the U.S. Affordable Patient Care Act (“health care reform” or “Obamacare”) will expand health care to the hundreds of thousands of people with HIV in our country who are currently without it. Globally, the U.S.-funded President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria bring care to millions of people living with HIV and other health care concerns worldwide. But the budgets of both programs are threatened by the global economic crisis and partisan politics.

Where You Come In: Members of the Learn Fight Love Alliance are working across the country to educate voters about the high stakes in this election when it comes to health care access. Using this great toolkit, <http://www.aidsunited.org/policy-advocacy/voter-mobilization-toolkit3> help ensure that everyone where you live has the information they need, and knows how to get to the polls. And don't forget to register—and vote!—yourself. After the election, people's survival will depend on the implementation of new health care policies in the United States. The HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA) is working with HIVHealthCare.org to arm people with the tools to make sure their state makes the most of health care reform. Sign up today to get hooked into local efforts. On the global front, you can support two organizations, Health GAP and the Student Global AIDS Campaign,

to help rally allies worldwide to defend global aid for AIDS budgets to ensure treatment access for all who need it. Want to organize a chapter of the SGAC on your campus? Easily done. Connect with them at studentglobalaidscampaign.org.

2 FUND THE FIGHT

The Issue: Let's be clear. We can't, and won't ever, end AIDS unless we secure enough financial capital to bridge the gaps left between global aid programs, private health insurance and national health programs. To do that, we need an influx of new funds—a bolus of cash if you will—to help meet the current need for prevention, testing and treatment tools. We either spend a bit more now, or a whole lot more later. Given that economies around the world are stretched to breaking point, in order to better fund the war effort, we need some innovative financing solutions.

The Solution: Enter The Robin Hood Tax. It's otherwise known globally as the “financial transaction tax” or “FTT.” Simply put, the FTT is a financing mechanism designed to generate hundreds of billions of fresh dollars by imposing a minimal tax (less than ½ of each 1%) on all financial transactions on Wall Street. It could help save the social safety net here and around the world by helping to cover health care costs and to offset other factors (like economic inequality, lack of education and joblessness) that contribute to inequality in accessing health care. As proponents of the FTT like to say, it's not a tax on the people, it's a tax for the people.

Where you come in: The members of the Learn Fight Love Alliance are dedicated to supporting the implementation of the Robin Hood Tax. They're working with a broad range of formal allies and ordinary folks across the United States. When you join us any of the member organizations in the alliance, you can be sure they'll offer you fun, easy ways to be a part of making historic change that'll win the revenue to end AIDS and fund health care. Find out more about the Robin Hood Tax at: <http://www.studentglobalaidscampaign.org/p/us-robin-hood-tax-campaign.html>

Support Our Grassroots Partners: Join the Learn Fight Love Alliance Today

The groups in the LFL Alliance have toolkits and resources to help you develop and expand your skills for fighting for social and health care justice. Visit the sites of our member organizations and learn how to reach the media, plan a campaign or action and convince local, state and federal political leaders to engage in the fight.

The AIDS Policy Project
aidspolicyproject.org

AmfAR
amfar.org

The Black AIDS Institute

Health Gap
healthgap.org

HIV Prevention Justice Alliance

Positive Women's Network
pwn-usa.org

The Sero Project
seroproject.com

Student Global AIDS Campaign
studentglobalaidscampaign.org

3 DEMAND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMBAT CRIMINALIZATION

The Issue: Though some progress has been made fighting the crushing stigma and fear that marked the early days of the AIDS epidemic, there are still thousands of people losing their jobs, their kids and even their freedom simply for being HIV positive. Deep stigma and bias against people with HIV persists. Stigma is not merely unfair and unethical—it's a powerful barrier that stands in the way of our ability to end the epidemic. Whether it takes the form of social isolation, formal discrimination, emotional or physical violence or legal punishment fear of HIV-related stigma and its various outgrowths can lead people to avoid getting tested and treated for HIV/AIDS. In a study conducted by the SERO Project, more than 25 percent of people living with HIV said they knew one or more person who did not want to get tested for HIV because of fear of criminal prosecution if they tested positive (and then were accused of not disclosing their status to a sexual partner). These fears are valid. Increasingly, people with HIV across the country are serving long jail sentences, even for having protected sex or engaging in other acts with little or no risk of HIV transmission.

The Solution: Ensuring legal rights for people living with HIV, especially for those living in deeply disenfranchised communities, is not a luxury—it's a necessity for ending the plague. Laws and policies that ensure equal health care access and protection for people with HIV/AIDS must be established, broadcast, and enforced.

Where You Come In: Speak up for the rights of people living with HIV. The HIV Prevention Justice Alliance is working with the Positive Justice Project and the SERO Project to confront the unjust criminalization of people living with HIV. Join us and we'll let you know about ways in which you can support the passage of protective laws and public policies. For information on laws that prosecute people with HIV, and information about how to protect others living with HIV from wrongful criminalization, please click [here](#)

4 HELP FIND VACCINES - AND THE CURE

The Issue: Scientific research aimed at finding preventive and therapeutic vaccines and a cure for HIV/AIDS has made quantum leaps forward in the last two years. One person has been deemed cured of HIV and several others who may have been functionally cured by antiretroviral therapy are under further investigation. Though the method through which the first person, known as "the Berlin Patient" was cured is not widely applicable, his case provide research scientists with critical insight that may allow them to replicate the effect of his cure without having to administer the risky, painful and costly stem-cell transplant that achieved it. The current thinking is that a functional cure for HIV may involve a combination of approaches such as antiretroviral therapy, some sort of vaccine and perhaps an agent to flush residual particles of HIV from hiding places in the body.

The Solution: AIDS vaccine and cure research is at a critical tipping point. An indicator that now is a time to heavy-up cure research funding is the fact that the U.S. National Institutes of Health doubled their dollars dedicated to AIDS cure research between 2011 and 2012 (from about \$41 million to about \$72 million). There is currently a piece of legislation, the "Cure AIDS Act" in the U.S. House of Representatives that calls for Congress to direct an additional \$100 million dollars to AIDS cure research within an existing AIDS research project within the U.S. military (they are already, like the NIH, investing in vaccine research and this cure money would be an adjunct). Advocating for more Congressionally-directed funds for cure research at the NIH and in other branches of government is key to accelerating the discovery of the cure.

Where You Come In: The Learn Fight Love Alliance supports our comrades of the AIDS Policy Project in their demands to the National Institutes of Health to further increase cure research. Endorse the petition [here](#) and send it to all your friends who will also help us call for a cure for AIDS. You can also support a new generation of cure hunters at the Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR). Their new initiative is called "Generation Cure" and it's focused on galvanizing young people behind the push for the cure for AIDS.

Meet Up and Power Up for Social and Health Care Justice: Getting It Together Through Getting Together

The LFL Alliance invites you to sponsor (or attend) a post-film gathering near where you see *How to Survive a Plague*.

Interested in hosting or attending a meet-up? Follow these six easy steps:

Watch *How to Survive a Plague* (find a screening location at surviveaplague.com). Recruit your friends and family to watch, too.

After seeing the film, go to surviveaplague.com to search for a local scheduled meet up and invite your friends to join you.

If you can't find a meet up near you or the location and/or time is inconvenient, host your own! It's easy. Just pick a time and day (thinking about what works best for people who may attend); find a space (call the local library, a school, coffee shop, café, diner or AIDS or community organization. Ask if you can borrow the space for your meet up); and register your meet up on surviveaplague.com. Others on the site will be able to see your scheduled meet up and the partner of the LFL Alliance will be sure you have everything you need to lead a campaign for change that will secure social and health care justice and further the fight to end AIDS.

Publicize your meet up. The members of the LFL Alliance will give you the basic tools to recruit people but you'll need to do the outreach to get people there. Reach out to your networks on all forms of social media, post flyers on your college campus or around your town, email people you think may be interested. Be sure to include your personal story about why this issue is important to you. Remember, the best way to get people to attend an event is to ask them three times, including one in person or on the phone.

Ask for their phone number when meeting someone new and be sure to call everyone to remind them to attend.

Hold your meet up. Remember, the top three goals of your meeting are to let people share their reactions to the film and/or discuss their role in the fight against HIV, to share current ways they can make a difference (through things like direct action campaigns to advocating for policy change as they saw happen in the film) and to encourage community building so the people in attendance are encouraged to keep working together in some way. One person should serve as the facilitator, ensuring everyone gets ample and fairly equal time to participate. If your group is big, consider using part of the time to break into smaller groups so everyone gets a chance to share their thoughts about the film and how the film inspires their activism. Continue the group by scheduling monthly meeting and know that the leadership role can revolve through the participants. Ask people at the first meeting to do something specific (e.g. create an agenda, make a flyer, recruit new members or research the latest news on your issue).

Maintain the momentum. Look for other local groups with whom you can join forces. Are you a student? Consider connecting with the Student Global AIDS Campaign to connect with like-minded peers. Consider forming your own affinity group. An affinity group is a self-sufficient support group of about 5-15 people. A number of affinity groups can work together to execute a large action or a single affinity group can conceive of and execute an action autonomously. For more information about creating an affinity group, write to: info@howtosurviveaplague.com



ACTING UP

Organizations We Love to Support

ACT UP – the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power

actupny.org | actupphilly.org | actupsf.org

ACT UP played an integral role in accelerating the development, approval and dissemination of life-sustaining drugs for people with HIV/AIDS. Known for their often shocking, and effective, demonstrations (think real corpses placed on the steps of Congress, human ashes thrown onto the White House lawn) the members of ACT UP continue to unite in anger engaging in direct action to end the AIDS pandemic. Their “Civil Disobedience Manual” is a must-read for any activist. The story of how ACT UP has helped saved millions of lives is documented in How To Survive a Plague.

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America (ACRIA)

Acria.org

ACRIA focuses on educating patients and health care providers about treatment options and how best to navigate the complexities of care. Founded in 1991 as the Community Research Initiative on AIDS (CRIA) by a group of physicians, activists and people living with the virus who were frustrated by the slow pace of government and academic AIDS research, the organization has helped develop medications that allow people living with HIV live longer, healthier lives.

AIDS United Aidsunited.org

AIDS United’s mission is to end the AIDS epidemic in the United States. They pursue that goal through national, regional and local policy/advocacy work, strategic grant making and capacity building. AIDS United works to ensure all living with the virus can access the care and treatment they need to survive.

The Black AIDS Institute (BAI) blackaids.org

BAI aims to correct the disproportionate rate at which African Americans contract, and die from, HIV/AIDS. Under the dynamic leadership of Phil Wilson, their motto—“Our People, Our Problem, Our Solution”—speaks to the self-empowerment and self-preservation that serve as the cornerstones of their work. In conjunction with The Kaiser Family Foundation, BAI has created a national public awareness campaign called “Greater Than AIDS” (greaterthan.org). BAI is a lead partner in the Learn | Fight | Love Alliance.

Faster Cures fastercures.org

The D.C.-based think tank works to accelerate medical solutions to the world’s most deadly diseases. They educate stakeholders about the barriers to breakthroughs, and help ensure research funding is applied for maximum impact. Their publication “Back to Basics: HIV Advocacy as a Model for Catalyzing Change” (fastercures.org/Publications/HIVAIDS-Change.php) offers a terrific analysis of how a diagnosis of HIV went from a death sentence to a treatable disease.

The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) amfar.org

Founded by Elizabeth Taylor and Dr. Matilde Krim, this fundraising, research and advocacy powerhouse invests directly in finding a cure for HIV/AIDS. They’ve invested more than \$340 million to fund 2,000+ cutting-edge research teams worldwide. Known for their A-list celeb-studded fundraisers, they have the freedom and flexibility to respond quickly to the most promising research. Their new “Generation Cure” initiative is cultivating new crop of leaders to help herald in the cure for AIDS.

Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) gmhc.org

While based in New York, GMHC has national influence and reach. Founded by gay men in 1981, their diverse constituents and beneficiaries now include people of all ages, gender and sexual orientations. One of the first, and still one of the best, providers of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and advocacy, the mighty GMHC sets a platinum standard for fighting HIV/AIDS.

Health GAP healthgap.org

The “GAP” stands for Global Access Project; they’re dedicated to ensuring affordable, life-sustaining access to care for all people with HIV/AIDS because they believe that health care is a human right. They see universal access as key to ending the pandemic globally and campaign against short-sighted policies that deny treatment to millions and fuel the spread of the virus. The HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA), one of Health GAP’s programs, is a lead partner in the Learn | Fight | Love Alliance.

HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA)

preventionjustice.org

Their slogan—“HIV/AIDS is not just a disease, it’s proof positive of social injustice”—says it all. They maintain that fighting against AIDS is fighting for human rights and social justice, particularly when it comes to marginalized communities. Working to herald in a paradigm shift in HIV prevention, they insist that society and our leaders address social determinants (such as poverty) that fuel viral spread. HIV PJA is a lead partner in the Learn | Fight | Love Alliance.

Housing Works

Housingworks.org

New Yorkers know and love their SoHo bookstore, and trendy thrift shops. Co-founder and CEO Charles King was an early ACT UP leader. Their innovative approach to raising money to fight the dual crisis of AIDS and homelessness was helping thousands of people long before the term “social entrepreneur” became au courant. NYC-based Housing Works is also a major force in the advocacy arena in Washington, DC, and has been on the ground in Haiti since 2008.

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC)

itpc.org

This global network of community organizations, local NGO’s, researchers and activists is dedicated to securing access to effective, affordable and quality treatment for all people living with HIV. They push for global scale-up of access to care; since research shows that antiretroviral HIV treatment, taken properly, can lower the risk of transmission by up to 96%, ITPC’s work protects both individual—and public—health. ITPC’s David Barr is featured in How to Survive a Plague.

ONE

One.org

A global, grassroots group with more than 3 million members, ONE fights extreme poverty and preventable diseases, particularly in Africa. ONE is known for raising public awareness and pressuring political leaders to support smart and effective policies and programs (meaning, those that actually save lives). A non-partisan org, ONE was co-founded by Bono and others focused on improving the health and well-being of the world’s most disenfranchised.

Planned Parenthood

Plannedparenthood.org

For 90 years, the nation’s leading sexual and reproductive health care provider and advocate has worked to improve women’s health and safety, prevent unintended pregnancies and advance the right and ability of individuals and families to make informed and responsible choices. They’ve recently upped their ante on HIV testing and prevention.

POZ Magazine

Poz.com, pozarmy.com

America’s leading publication focused on HIV/AIDS, POZ offers the latest research and treatment information as well as daily news of HIV/AIDS and stories to educate, inspire and empower its million-plus readership. Get involved with the POZ Army to help lobby for life-sustaining meds for people with HIV—and health care justice for all.

SisterLove

Sisterlove.org

The roots of SisterLove can be traced to a group of women interested in teaching people in Atlanta, especially women, about safer sex techniques, including HIV/AIDS prevention. Founder Dazon Dixon Diallo had a

personal understanding of what kept women from the education they needed to stay safe and healthy. SisterLove is all about women sharing their struggles and wisdom to protect their sisters from harm.

The Staying Alive Foundation

Stayingalivefoundation.org

The prevention-based org launched by MTV believes in stopping the spread of HIV before it starts by focusing on the delivery of fresh, relevant prevention messaging that breaks through to a young, global audience, arming them with the information and empowerment they need to stay safe from HIV/AIDS. They back innovative programs on the ground, by funding the creative and ambitious young leaders that run them.

The Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC)

studentglobalaidscampaign.org

These next-gen leaders are working at college campuses across the country (85 and counting). Since they came of age in a global era, they are not only fighting for prevention and treatment access, but also the elimination of debt in the developing world and reform of global trade rules. Their media-savvy strategic campaigns are aimed at decision-makers and raising public awareness. SGAC is a lead partner in the Learn | Fight | Love Alliance.

Treatment Action Group (TAG)

treatmentactiongroup.org

The independent AIDS research and policy think tank comprised of science-based treatment activists fights for better treatment, education and access to care for people with HIV. They also focus on accelerating vital research and effective community engagement with research and policy institutions in pursuit of vaccines and a cure. TAG’s indomitable Mark Harrington is featured in How to Survive a Plague.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ART AS ACTIVISM

Artist/activist Vincent William Gagliostro, one of ACT UP's original members, reflects on how he, and others, used the power of images and words to survive—and begin to stop—a plague. And, he invites a new generation of artists to join the fight.

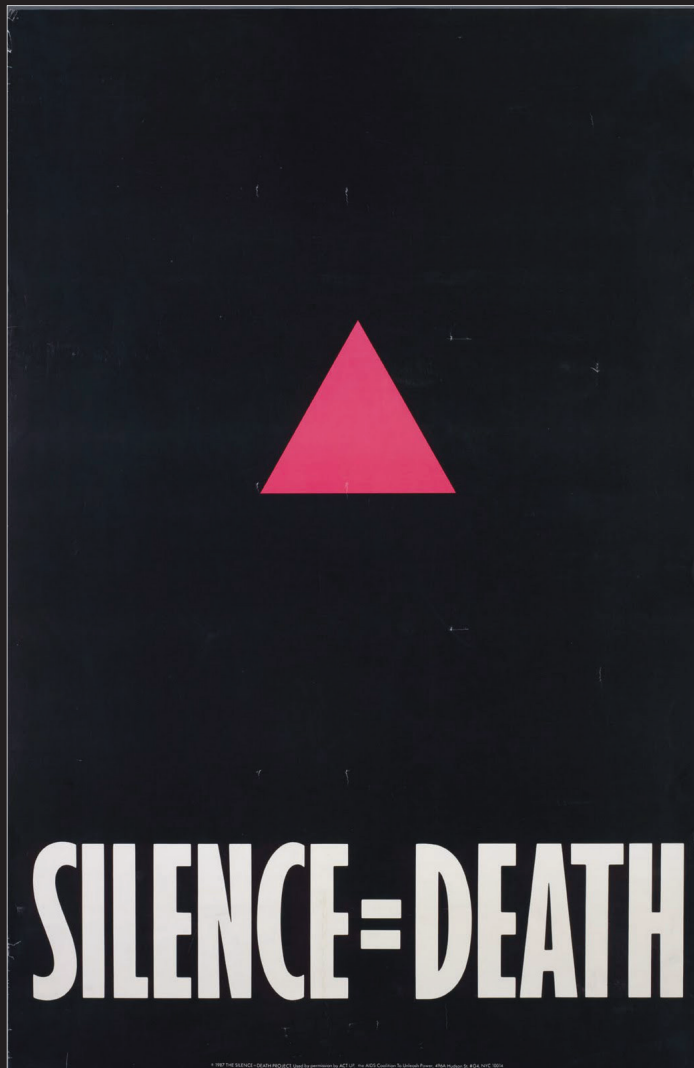
For many years, I shared a summerhouse with my three best friends. On the way to the supermarket early one evening as I was getting into the car, my friend Tom's boyfriend asked me, "Don't you ever stop?" I had no idea what he was talking about. We paused. He pointed to my ACT UP t-shirt. "That," he said.

Using art as activism, such as wearing a graphic t-shirt and politicizing AIDS, was second nature to me.

Every time I had that shirt on, I felt I could blow down the doors of City Hall or The White House.

ACT UP stands for the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power and every Monday night, members of ACT UP met and shared personal stories. At some point, someone would start to chant, "ACT UP, Fight Back, Fight AIDS" and the floor would cheer louder than anything I would ever hear.

When I would leave an ACT UP meeting charged with the task of creating graphics for the next planned demonstration, my first thought was how do I keep the crowd shouting and yelling. They were my inspiration. And I had to inspire them. I always made my graphics first for them, for us. Yes, the graphics needed to articulate and disseminate our knowledge about a particular issue to the general public, government officials and/or drug companies. But as important as it was for the graphics to communicate a message, it was equally important that they speak to and galvanize the movement itself. I needed my work to politicize the issue of HIV/AIDS for my community because, quite frankly, we needed bodies to show up at the demonstrations. My favorite line remains, "Get Off Your Ass and Demonstrate." The early eighties were a time in which



we could piss people off and get away with it.

Which brings me to *How To Survive a Plague*. It's clear to me that with this film David France has not only given insight into how the early AIDS activists fought effectively for social change, he also created a blueprint for how you can do it today.

Take from the film the permission to engage fiercely your voices as artists in the issues that move you. Know the power of art to launch and serve as activism. One poster, "Silence=Death" energized and empowered a room full of people, some of whom you met in the film, to fight for the lives of people living with a deadly virus.

Does *How To Survive a Plague* have a happy ending? You can decide for yourself. Me? I see it as more as a happy beginning. By chronicling how AIDS activists sped up science to spare lives, it offers a proof of concept that the world's hardest problems can have

solutions if enough of the right people come together in the right way and fight relentlessly. And it shows that while we've come a long way in the fight against AIDS, we still need to finish the battle.

Artists have the power to visually articulate the heart and soul of a movement. Ask yourself what your movement looks like. Then imagine engaging yourself and your work in that movement.

Just imagine the trouble it could stir up.

I look forward to engaging with you and your work. Join me on: <http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/how-to-survive-a-plague>

Vincent Gagliostro
September 2012
www.gagliostro.com.



SO, NOW WHAT?

You're Fired Up to Change the World. Here are some great ways to get started.

SIGN UP Connect Online.

Go to surviveaplague.com/partners to find links to the organizations highlighted on page 10.

CONNECT Via Cell.

Text "HIVJA" to 68398 (The HIV Prevention Justice Alliance is a leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS)

CONNECT in Real Life.

Join a "Learn | Fight | Love" meet-up. Find out how at surviveaplague.com/meet-up

CONNECT with Us.

Email the team behind *How To Survive a Plague* at info@surviveaplague.com

GET CREATIVE.

Art meets activism on our tumblr page: surviveaplague.tumblr.com.

Find Us:

On Twitter: [@surviveaplague](https://twitter.com/surviveaplague)

On FB: facebook.com/SurviveAPlague

Online: www.surviveaplague.com

SPREAD THE WORD.

Share photos from your volunteer work, activism or meet-ups across your social media networks.

VOTE With Your Feet.

Volunteer. Join a group. Start your own affinity group. Learn how at surviveaplague.com.

VOTE with Your Wallet.

Support our "free tickets for youth" initiative.

VOTE. Just Plain Vote.

The elections are November 6. It's your right. Exercise it.



LEARN



FIGHT



LOVE

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The *How to Survive a Plague* team would like to thank



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Thanks to Tickets For Youth Supporters
Joy Tomchin | Donald Capoccia | Henry van Ameringen