

Constructing the “Unofficial” History of HIV/AIDS: Self- Representation in AIDS Documentaries

Kylo-Patrick R. Hart, Texas Christian University

During the first decade of the AIDS pandemic (and beyond), the “official” history of HIV/AIDS, as constructed and communicated by media professionals of all kinds (including print and broadcast journalists, filmmakers, photographers, and many others), readily emphasized an “us” (general population) versus “them” (guilty villains) dichotomy as a “form of macabre entertainment.”¹ In this regard, gay men were continuously demonized as villains in the health crisis who were to be blamed for AIDS and undeserving of sympathy in relation to their suffering, in a continual stream of “heavily moralized tableaux” that said far more about contemporary morality pertaining to sexuality than they did about the realities of HIV/AIDS as experienced by individuals around the world.² As Ellis Hanson succinctly characterized this disconcerting state of affairs in the early 1990s:

When AIDS hits the networks [and related media outlets], gay lives cease to be valuable in themselves, but acquire relevance as a family comes to grips with tragedy and its age-old nemesis, The Homosexual. As Simon Watney has described it, the neo-conservative “family” starts to resemble something out of a 1950s B-movie, a catastrophe flick in which horrendous natural forces threaten the heterosexual solidarity of the home. . . . Particularly with AIDS hysteria, “family” quickly becomes a metaphor for “nation,” effectively rendering the citizenship and civil rights of gay people suspect. . . . Perhaps it is fitting then that so many people with AIDS are, or become, homeless.

HR

The Humanities Review
Volume 11, Issue 1
Spring 2013 pp 40-52.
St. John's University

Dr. Kylo-Patrick R. Hart

is currently the chair of the Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media at Texas Christian University. He is the author or editor of several books about media, including, *The AIDS Movie: Representing a Pandemic in Film and Television*; *Film and Sexual Politics*; *Film and Television Stardom*; *Images for a Generation Doomed: The Films and Career of Gregg Araki*; and *Queer Males in Contemporary Cinema: Becoming Visible*.

But even when a gay man does have a home, there would seem to be a taboo against filming him in it. You are more likely to see a gay man with AIDS on a park bench, in a doctor's office, or confined to a hospital bed, even though these places are not likely to be his usual habitats.³

Hanson's observations say a great deal about the various harmful representational strategies pertaining to gay men with AIDS that were common in U.S. media offerings during the pandemic's first two decades. Similarly, Paula Treichler observed that mainstream AIDS media-coverage patterns of that same era have frequently been “so identical that one imagines their representatives all at the same AIDS workshop—learning how to give events the same conventional interpretations, select the same AIDS experts, use the same misleading technology, and track down the same live footage from the people who were really there,” despite the reality that mainstream media outlets are far from monolithic.⁴

Unfortunately, even when countless medical and media professionals actually knew better, they continued to socially construct gay men as, in the words of AIDS scholar Jeff Nunokawa, “not only people with AIDS, but *the* people with AIDS.”⁵ In Nunokawa's assessment, the cultural confusion that resulted from this sort of pervasive construction tended “at once to cooperate with the various works of marginalization that render invisible the burdens that AIDS [had] imposed on other disproportionately affected groups in this country, not to mention other countries, and at the same time, to encourage our culture's sometimes lethal distaste for, and anxiety about, homosexuality.”⁶ In addition, such a deleterious social construction also resulted in, as Hanson concludes, an impassioned “quest to destroy gay life” that included continuous efforts by media professionals, scientists, politicians, and others “to silence gay people, to identify and immobilize them, to expose their ‘secret’ and define their characteristics, and at last (after a fashion) to impale them as with a stake.”⁷ He elaborates:

I mean the pop-science magazine that seeks to re-map my body in order to sell terrifying images of my blood and semen. I mean the policeman who is gloved and armed to the teeth, my teeth, for fear I might bite or scratch or spit. I mean the psychoanalyst who has defined me in terms of his own repugnance for feminine sexuality, who has made me not so much vagina dentata as anus dentatus. Rectum, urethra, mouth, tear ducts, a gash on my skin. All my orifices are one and the same, and all my orifices have teeth.⁸

Media professionals regularly create representations of the various phenomena they cover based on the accepted, inherited conventions of their respective medium as well as their personal understandings of the subject matter they have chosen (or been instructed) to depict.⁹ Nevertheless, as numerous AIDS

activists in the late 1980s and early 1990s were quick to note, in contrast to how they were typically portrayed in mainstream U.S. media offerings of various kinds, gay men and other people with AIDS were not really victims (as in the common phrase “AIDS victims”), and they were only patients (as in the common phrase “AIDS patients”) during the (frequently brief) periods of time during which they were actually hospitalized.¹⁰ Instead, many of them could readily be regarded as “AIDS warriors” in the fight to prolong their own lives as well as the battle to bring more realistic representations of AIDS and people with AIDS to the mainstream masses.¹¹

Acknowledging the reality that the individual who possesses the recording apparatus plays a substantial role in determining how and which people with AIDS are portrayed in film and video images, during this same era a growing number of gay men with AIDS intentionally began to construct the “unofficial” history of HIV/AIDS, at least in part, by featuring themselves and others like them in documentaries that were created through their own direct participation—in dramatic contrast to media offerings made by cultural “outsiders”—as a meaningful form of alternative representational production that reacted against the culturally pervasive and predominant (mainstream) media representations of the pandemic.¹² Because history has demonstrated time and time again that blaming the victims of any epidemic disease is far easier whenever they are socially constructed and, as a result, widely perceived as being inherently “different,” a primary intention underlying many of these documentaries was to demonstrate to all kinds of audience members the widespread similarities that exist between gay men with AIDS and anyone/everyone else.¹³ For as Norbert Gilmore has convincingly demonstrated, “As much as AIDS has been an epidemic of disease and death, it has also been an epidemic of metaphors and symbols that separate people [and] have stereotyped, stigmatized, and ‘cast out’ gay men with HIV/AIDS.”¹⁴

Given this problematic social context, the goal of this essay is to explore two of the more widely distributed (surviving) documentaries of this kind that feature self-representation by gay men with AIDS: *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* (1993, directed by Tom Joslin and Peter Friedman) and *Fast Trip, Long Drop* (1994, directed by Gregg Bordowitz). Before launching into this exploration, a few additional introductory insights are deserving of mention. Video was the preferred medium of the individuals creating these documentaries (as well as many other AIDS activists), in part because it was inexpensive and widely available, but also because its requisite technologies were so easy to use by virtually anyone, anywhere. Because the primary driving forces behind these documentaries are typically the subjects with HIV/AIDS themselves, their spirit and personality typically pervade the ultimate creations that result.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for the camerawork and editing in such offerings to be a bit crude, or the lighting to be a bit unappealing, or the sound to be a bit difficult to comprehend in certain parts;¹⁶ however, these less polished production values typically contribute to an enhanced aura of

“authenticity” because they signify the works as being those of “ordinary people” rather than “professionals.”¹⁷ Furthermore, it is not uncommon for such offerings to pose direct challenges to authority and, in doing so, to present alternative versions of the realities and history of AIDS that most mainstream audience members have not regularly (if ever) encountered.¹⁸

The Art of Intervention: *Silverlake Life*

In dramatic contrast to the conventions employed in many mainstream media offerings to depict gay men with HIV/AIDS during the pandemic’s early years (e.g., obscuring images and identities through heavy backlighting or isolating subjects in deep shadow, as if they had something to be ashamed of or to hide), *Silverlake Life: The View from Here* is a video diary begun by Tom Joslin in the late 1980s after his partner of more than two decades, Mark Massi, developed AIDS.¹⁹ Set in the Silverlake neighborhood of Los Angeles, it documents the daily actions and interactions of these two men (and occasional others) during the final months of their relationship, after Joslin himself also developed AIDS and his health decline occurred more quickly than Massi’s. (Over time, therefore, the emphasis of the documentary shifted from Massi to Joslin as its primary subject, with Massi and friends of the couple assuming more of the shooting and editing tasks as the months progressed.)

As Rob Baker explains about *Silverlake Life* in his book *The Art of AIDS: From Stigma to Conscience*:

The work is devastating. The filmmaker/subject (who also did much of the initial editing himself, using equipment at his bedside) did not spare himself (or the viewer) the more painful details: we see his KS lesions (and those of his lover), we see him waste away into a virtual skeleton, we see him dead and being placed into a body bag. The earlier scenes are upsetting enough to watch (“It’s so tough, the simplest five-minute task,” [Joslin] tells the camera at one point, when he feels weak during a trip to the grocery store and has to go lie down in his car in the parking lot. “You have to come to the car and put the seat back and rest. What a way to live; what a way to die.”); the final scenes are almost unbearable, as treatments (both medical and homeopathic) give way to mental confusion and further and further physical deterioration.²⁰

Indeed, as Baker notes, the experience of watching *Silverlake Life* is quite challenging and (frequently) disturbing for most viewers. But that is precisely this documentary’s primary objective—to enable viewers to enter the home and lives of the documentary’s central gay couple, experience the numerous health challenges they encounter as well as the tremendous love and affection that is evident

between them, witness the dramatic health decline of a gay man whose physical appearance transforms from healthy-looking to that of a (barely) living skeleton, and sympathize with the emotional roller coaster that his lover experiences in the days and weeks after he has died. In doing so, as Peggy Phelan expresses, this documentary reverses the “mainstream cultural imperative that constructs AIDS as shameful, humiliating, and obscene” as it simultaneously reveals the inherent goodness and virtues possessed by its two central gay men with AIDS.²¹

As the documentary proceeds, the viewer is confronted with images of extreme exhaustion resulting from painful health episodes and sleepless nights, various approaches to healing (including a seemingly farfetched one that involves speaking in tongues and the supposed channeling of otherworldly spirits), emergency visits to the hospital, and Joslin explaining directly to the camera how one medical professional described a brain condition he personally experienced as being akin to “bats hanging from the back of your brainstem, upside down, and slowly eating their way up.” Tension mounts as Joslin begins to talk more regularly about events that have not actually occurred, and as he becomes increasingly frail and virtually unable to move. Then, when it has become clear that Joslin’s end is indisputably near, the film’s most powerful segment begins to unfold on screen. During this painfully moving sequence, shot just moments after Joslin has succumbed to AIDS, Massi points the camera directly at his deceased lover’s lifeless face and sings “You Are My Sunshine” to him, reinforcing the extreme depths of both his love and personal loss. Seconds later in the documentary, Massi pulls back a sheet to reveal Joslin’s extremely emaciated, naked and fragile body, and he looks on as the remains of the man he loves are wrapped callously in sheets of plastic and removed from their home. The impact of viewing a real-life deceased individual that viewers have come to know, just minutes after he has passed and revealing the devastating physical consequences wrought by AIDS, cannot be overstated.

About the cumulative impact of *Silverlake Life* with regard to altering cultural understandings of the lived realities of gay men with AIDS, Beverly Seckinger and Janet Jakobsen emphasize that this work reconfigures the relationship between producers and audiences “by collapsing the roles of producer and subject, and [by] emphasizing [Joslin] and [Massi’s] visible role as agents in constructing a document of their lives destined for each other and for a broader public. The focus on everyday tasks (going shopping, doing laundry, eating pizza, dancing in the living room) also allows the film to eschew an exotic Othering of its subjects, even as it points to the ways in which the preciousness of everyday experience is heightened by the proximity of death.”²² Furthermore, Harry Benshoff and Sean Griffin note that the overall effectiveness of this documentary stems from its refusal to shy away from telling the *real* story of AIDS and gay-male relationships in ways that might be off-putting to the types of viewers who actually are most in need of exposure to these sorts of images.²³

At one key moment in the documentary, Massi points out that real life does not imitate art as he explains how—unlike in the movies—when he tried to close Joslin’s eyelids after his partner died, they sprang right back open again. His observation pertains equally well to the status of the images presented in *Silverlake Life* as compared to those common in fictional and fictionalized accounts of HIV/AIDS, and people with AIDS, that were made and released in U.S. society during the first two decades of the pandemic. Unlike other media representations of AIDS, *Silverlake Life* daringly foregrounds two phenomena that U.S. society prefers to keep conveniently out of sight: homosexuality and death.²⁴ It is perhaps all the more surprising, therefore, that this documentary was identified by *The Boston Globe*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *USA Today* as one of the top-ten films of 1993 and by *The Village Voice* and *Utne Reader* as one of the most outstanding films of the 1990s.²⁵

The Personal Is Political: *Fast Trip, Long Drop*

In their discussion of *Silverlake Life*, Seckinger and Jakobsen point out that, as time progressed, self-representation of gay men in some AIDS documentaries began to move beyond the relatively straightforward video-diary approach that was foregrounded in that offering. In contrast, to create more engaging and (at times) more politically subversive offerings, a growing number of such documentary makers began to complicate “their use of conventional realist strategies such as talking-head interviews and observational footage with scripted, performed, stylized, and overtly manipulated sequences to produce layered, multivalent perspectives on the real.”²⁶ Furthermore, at times these sorts of documentary projects opted to remain straightforward about the realities of the pandemic while simultaneously unburdening themselves of the ulterior motive to provide a positive representation that would be readily palatable to mainstream audience members, imbuing them with an extraordinarily raw power and impact.²⁷ Such realities certainly pertain well to Gregg Bordowitz’s *Fast Trip, Long Drop*.

In contrast to mainstream AIDS documentaries that typically featured the most debilitated gay men with AIDS that their makers could possibly find²⁸—or what Emmanuel Dreuilhe has referred to as the “instinct for the sensational [that prefers] the bald and wasted AIDS patient with the feverish, haggard look, lying in his hospital bed (preferably with a few tubes up his nose)”²⁹—*Fast Trip, Long Drop* eschews the use of simplistic, stereotypical imagery while at the same time it “cathartically unleashes all of the negative thoughts and grave doubts strategically omitted from [the] more activist-oriented tapes of the late ‘80s and early ‘90s.”³⁰ A primary goal of this documentary, as Jon Davies explains, is to remind viewers “how necessary it is to express feelings like despair in times of great injustice.”³¹ He elaborates:

In the 1980s, the idea that the great battle against AIDS could someday

be “won” was widely circulated. . . . As the years dragged on and this declaration of an end seemed more and more impossible, hope was always tainted by the knowledge of the inequity that for some the crisis *would* end while for others it would only intensify. . . . Bordowitz’s mentor Douglas Crimp [critiqued] what seemed like a hollow optimism and heroizing in some of the videos aimed at a general audience: “What is necessary now is the self-representation of our *demoralization*. We urgently need resources to help us cope with the consequences of losing hope for a cure for AIDS, of dealing with loss upon loss, with so much hatred directed at us. . . .” Crimp lauds *Fast Trip, Long Drop* as embodying the demoralizing self-representation he calls for, as it both rejects a moralistic discourse and refuses to hide the dejected worldview gripping many in the movement.³²

What should be evident from Davies’ assessment is that *Fast Trip, Long Drop*—although sharing a common creative lineage and some of the same representational strategies and goals—is a qualitatively distinct type of documentary as compared to *Silverlake Life*. In part, that is because its overall mood and tone are a bit darker and more evidently political. In addition, it is because Bordowitz alternates video-diary footage of his own experiences living with HIV/AIDS (including reflections on ways to remain hopeful in the face of ever-increasing loss and interactions with family members who fear they may lose him far too soon) with found footage from old black-and-white films (of men walking a tightrope and being shot out of a cannon, wrecking balls destroying huge buildings, vehicles crashing into brick walls, and accidents involving crash test dummies), staged scenes with members of his support group, video images from actual AIDS-activism protests and rallies, and—perhaps most notably of all—brief scripted/performed critiques of mainstream approaches to telling the story of AIDS in relation to gay men. As I explain in my book *The AIDS Movie: Representing a Pandemic in Film and Television*:

During such critiques, Bordowitz and a few of his associates assume the roles of a homophobic news anchor, an uncaring counselor, a heterosexual “innocent victim,” and related (stereotypic) others to explore more fully the ways by which people with AIDS—and gay men especially—are regularly treated negatively in American society. Although this documentary could proceed effectively without them, such critiques serve primarily to strengthen the impact of the contents of their surrounding documentary images by more blatantly calling into question the typical functioning of media professionals, healthcare professionals, government officials, and other influential social actors in response to the AIDS pandemic.³³

In the process, therefore, Bordowitz ends up intercutting “the present with the

past by mixing archival material with original footage” in order to demonstrate, both visually and thematically, that both his subject matter and approach are striving intentionally to move well beyond seemingly outdated images of gay men with AIDS “surviving and thriving,” captured largely to soothe the guilt and/or anxieties of mainstream audience members.³⁴ In fact and instead, as Davies observes, “Putting on a brave face to make others comfortable is a hypocrisy that Bordowitz resists with every frame of *Fast Trip, Long Drop*.”³⁵

When all is said and done, Bordowitz’s documentary offers a refreshing blend of humor and nihilism as he seeks to make sense of key events in his life in relation to his resulting identity as an angry (gay) young man/political activist with HIV/AIDS in a society and historical era that appear to be resentful of his very existence. About the making of this work, Bordowitz has commented that he found it necessary for someone to create a documentary about the complexities of the AIDS crisis that was directed primarily to other people with AIDS (rather than to members of the so-called “general population”), one that explicitly featured individuals attempting to come to terms with the potentiality of their own imminent deaths.³⁶ He further explains that he had grown tired of pretending, for the benefit of others, that he was going to survive and therefore endeavored to turn the anger and despair of gay men with AIDS into a political force that needed to be reckoned with once and for all.³⁷ “I wanted an honest media produced in the interests of people living with AIDS,” Bordowitz says. “If we couldn’t do this, then it all seemed like bullshit. . . . The overwhelming majority of AIDS media made up until that point presumed a straight audience of HIV-negative people who were threatened by queers and junkies.”³⁸

Writing about Bordowitz’s stylistically distinctive creation at the 1994 Sundance Film Festival, Robert Hawk articulates, “Anything but solemn, this chronicle of AIDS activism, personal testimony, and representational concerns is a kaleidoscopic blast of visual stimulation, intellectual irreverence, and emotional confrontation. . . . Bordowitz embraces all of this within a personal vision that is playful, passionate, angry, smart, and sassy (with some klezmer music thrown in to top it off). Ultimately, he has given [us] a courageous work of art.”³⁹ In response to those sorts of critical assessments, however, the filmmaker has personally expressed, “*Fast Trip, Long Drop* was very well received, which surprised me because it is very dark and pessimistic. It was made at a very low point.”⁴⁰

Concluding Observations

“What do ‘the picture of health’ and ‘the picture of sickness’ look like?” asks Jan Zita Grover in the introduction to her essay “Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA in America.” “A stupid question, to be sure,” she continues, “unless we refine it: *whose* picture of health/sickness? and for *whom*? and in the service of *what*?”⁴¹ Such

questions are of substantial relevance to the phenomenon of self-representation of gay men in the AIDS documentaries *Silverlake Life: The View from Here*; *Fast Trip*, *Long Drop*; and related offerings from the first two decades of the pandemic. For as Alexandra Juhasz has noted:

The production and viewing of alternative AIDS video [such as the two documentaries explored in this essay] is a form of direct, immediate, product-oriented activism. . . . A most significant way in which alternative videomaking—usually work produced for little expense and with little formal training using camcorders and other inexpensive or “low-end” video technologies—counters and alters mainstream media is that it localizes the production and reception of this usually universalizing mode of discourse. . . . The [resulting] political impact of alternative media comes as much from oppositional distribution and exhibition strategies (organizing screenings *outside* the community) as it does from oppositional production (making images from *within* a community).⁴²

AIDS documentaries conceived and created by gay men with AIDS reacted against the inaccuracy, melodrama, and sensationalism common among mainstream representations of HIV/AIDS and sought to tell the types of stories—in unique and better informed ways—that the majority of those mainstream media offerings refused to: stories of lovers and friends, and the emotions and conditions they regularly experienced, that previously had not been told and/or encountered by mainstream audience members.⁴³ Stemming from the recognition that the “ideological work performed by images is central to [re]defining subjectivity,”⁴⁴ they effectively challenged the formulaic AIDS “master narrative” in U.S. society by offering powerful counter-examples to its recurrent representational strategies, conventions, and stereotypical images pertaining to actual behavior, assumed and perceived identities, eroticized bodies, fantasies and desires and uncoupling the representational link between gay men with AIDS and vampires, mysterious killers, and other dangerous strangers in the night.⁴⁵

If Jon Davis is correct when he writes, “Emotions play a decisive role in what political change we feel is possible whilst the queer past, and our feelings towards it, fully impacts how we can imagine a queer present and future”⁴⁶—and I believe that he is—then the two documentaries discussed herein served effectively to begin motivating the social re-construction of HIV/AIDS and people with AIDS in U.S. society. Both utilized the challenging, at-times-painful lived experiences of actual gay men with AIDS to forge meaningful (cultural) connections with audience members of various demographic backgrounds as they simultaneously enabled both their creators and their viewers to discover commonalities with others and, even more profoundly, to mourn the death of others—and potentially of themselves.⁴⁷

Notes

1. Simon Watney, “Short-Term Companions: AIDS as Popular Entertainment,” in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 154.
2. Watney, “Short-Term Companions,” 154.
3. Ellis Hanson, “Undead,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 335-36.
4. Paula A. Treichler, “Seduced and Terrorized: AIDS and Network Television,” in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 136-37.
5. Jeff Nunokawa, “All the Sad Young Men’: AIDS and the Work of Mourning,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 312.
6. Nunokawa, “All the Sad Young Men,” 312.
7. Hanson, “Undead,” 325.
8. Hanson, “Undead,” 325.
9. Jan Z. Grover, “Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA in America,” in *Fluid Exchanges: Artists and Critics in the AIDS Crisis*, ed. James Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 24.
10. Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro, “Shocking Pink Praxis: Race and Gender on the ACT UP Frontlines,” in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991), 344.
11. Saalfield and Navarro, “Shocking Pink Praxis,” 344.
12. Saalfield and Navarro, “Shocking Pink Praxis,” 344-46.
13. Mikhael Elbaz and Ruth Murbach, “Fear of the Other, Condemned and Damned: AIDS, Epidemics, and Exclusions,” in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 6.
14. Norbert Gilmore, “An AIDS Chronicle,” in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 23.
15. Rob Baker, *The Art of AIDS: From Stigma to Conscience* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 37.
16. Baker, *Art of AIDS*, 37.
17. Kylo-Patrick R. Hart, *The AIDS Movie: Representing a Pandemic in Film and Television* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 93-94.
18. Baker, *Art of AIDS*, 80.
19. Grover, “Visible Lesions,” 32.
20. Baker, *Art of AIDS*, 85.
21. Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997), 154.

22. Beverly Seckinger and Janet Jakobsen, "Love, Death, and Videotape: Silverlake Life," in *Between the Sheets, In the Streets*, ed. Chris Holmlund and Cynthia Fuchs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 150.
23. Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 211.
24. David Ehrenstein, "AIDS, Death, and Videotape," *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1993, accessed July 25, 2012, http://www.articles.latimes.com/1993-03-14/entertainment/ca-541_1_silverlake-life-tom-joslin-mark-massi, par. 7.
25. POV/PBS, "Silverlake Life: The View from Here," accessed July 25, 2012, http://www.pbs.org/pov/silverlake/film_description.php, par. 8.
26. Seckinger and Jakobsen, "Love, Death, and Videotape," 154.
27. Baker, Art of AIDS, 37.
28. Grover, "Visible Lesions," 32.
29. Emmanuel Dreuilhe, *Mortal Embrace: Living with AIDS* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1988), 122.
30. Jon Davies, "Fast Trip, Long Drop," accessed July 25, 2012, <http://www.jondavies.ca/Bordowitz.pdf>, 93.
31. Davies, "Fast Trip," 93.
32. Davies, "Fast Trip," 94.
33. Hart, *AIDS Movie*, 95.
34. Davies, "Fast Trip," 95-96.
35. Davies, "Fast Trip," 96.
36. "Fast Trip, Long View: Talking to Gregg Bordowitz," accessed July 25, 2012, http://www.artistswithaids.org/artery/artist/artist_bordowitz.html, par. 40-41.
37. "Fast Trip, Long View," par. 41.
38. "Fast Trip, Long View," par. 41, 43.
39. Robert Hawk, *Review of Fast Trip, Long Drop* (contained on the VHS cover box), par. 2-3.
40. "Fast Trip, Long View," par. 38.
41. Grover, "Visible Lesions," 23.
42. Alexandra Juhasz, "Make a Video for Me: Alternative AIDS Video by Women," in *Gendered Epidemic: Representations of Women in the Age of AIDS*, ed. Nancy L. Roth and Katie Hogan (New York: Routledge, 1998), 205-06.
43. Treichler, "Seduced and Terrorized," 138; John Greyson, "Still Searching," in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 85.
44. Monika Gagnon and Tom Folland, "The Spectacular Ruse," in *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993), 103.

45. Treichler, "Seduced and Terrorized," 143-44; Watney, "Short-Term Companions," 153.
46. Davies, "Fast Trip," 92.
47. "Fast Trip, Long View," par. 50; Phelan, *Mourning Sex*, 161.

Works Cited

- Baker, Rob. *The Art of AIDS: From Stigma to Conscience*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- Benshoff, Harry M., and Sean Griffin. *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.
- Davies, Jon. "Fast Trip, Long Drop." Accessed July 25, 2012. <http://www.jondavies.ca/Bordowitz.pdf>.
- Dreuilhe, Emmanuel. *Mortal Embrace: Living with AIDS*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1988.
- Ehrenstein, David. "AIDS, Death, and Videotape." *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1993. Accessed July 25, 2012. http://www.articles.latimes.com/1993-03-14/entertainment/ca-541_1_silverlake-life-tom-joslin-mark-massi.
- Elbaz, Mikhael, and Ruth Murbach. "Fear of the Other, Condemned and Damned: AIDS, Epidemics, and Exclusions." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 1-9. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.
- "Fast Trip, Long View: Talking to Gregg Bordowitz." Accessed July 25, 2012. http://www.artistswithaids.org/artery/artist/artist_bordowitz.html.
- Gagnon, Monika, and Tom Folland. "The Spectacular Ruse." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 96-105. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.
- Gilmore, Norbert. "An AIDS Chronicle." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 16-31. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.
- Greyson, John. "Still Searching." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 85-95. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.
- Grover, Jan Z. "Visible Lesions: Images of the PWA in America." In *Fluid Exchanges: Artists and Critics in the AIDS Crisis*, edited by James Miller, 23-52. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Hanson, Ellis. "Undead." In *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss, 324-40. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Hart, Kylo-Patrick R. *The AIDS Movie: Representing a Pandemic in Film and Television*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Hawk, Robert. *Review of Fast Trip, Long Drop*, contained on the VHS cover box.

Juhasz, Alexandra. "Make a Video for Me: Alternative AIDS Video by Women." In *Gendered Epidemic: Representations of Women in the Age of AIDS*, edited by Nancy L. Roth and Katie Hogan, 205-20. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Nunokawa, Jeff. "All the Sad Young Men': AIDS and the Work of Mourning." In *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss, 311-23. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Phelan, Peggy. *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*. London: Routledge, 1997.

POV/PBS. "Silverlake Life: The View from Here." Accessed July 25, 2012. http://www.pbs.org/pov/silverlake/film_description.php.

Saalfield, Catherine, and Ray Navarro. "Shocking Pink Praxis: Race and Gender on the ACT UP Frontlines." In *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, edited by Diana Fuss, 341-69. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Seckinger, Beverly, and Janet Jakobsen. "Love, Death, and Videotape: Silverlake Life." In *Between the Sheets, In the Streets*, edited by Chris Holmlund and Cynthia Fuchs, 144-57. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Treichler, Paula A. "Seduced and Terrorized: AIDS and Network Television." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 136-51. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.

Watney, Simon. "Short-Term Companions: AIDS as Popular Entertainment." In *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*, edited by Allan Klusacek and Ken Morrison, 152-65. Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1993.

Hart, K.-P. (2013), "Constructing the 'unofficial' history of HIV/AIDS: self-representation in AIDS documentaries", *The Humanities Review*, 11(1): 40-52. Google Scholar. Hunston, S. (2000), "Evaluation and the planes of discourse: Status and value in persuasive texts", in S. Hunston and G. Thompson (eds.), *Evaluation in Texts: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 176-207. Google Scholar. Kabachnik, P. (2009), "To choose, fix or ignore culture?" Cite this chapter as: Piazza R. (2015) *The Representation of Travellers in Television Documentaries*. In: Piazza R., Haarman L., Caborn A. (eds) *Values and Choices in Television Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. Learn about the history of HIV/AIDS in the U.S. The HIV.gov Timeline reflects the history of the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic from the first reported cases in 1981 to the present where advances in HIV prevention, care, and treatment offer hope for a long, healthy life to people who are living with, or at risk for, HIV and AIDS. Download and share this timeline (PDF 995 KB). The history of the HIV and AIDS epidemic began in illness, fear and death as the world faced a new and unknown virus. However, scientific advances, such as the development of antiretroviral drugs, have enabled people with access to treatment to live long and healthy lives with HIV. Here, we go through the key historical moments that have defined the HIV epidemic over the past 30 years. In June, the first reports of AIDS in children hinted that it could be passed via casual contact but this was later ruled out and it was concluded that they had probably directly acquired AIDS from their mothers before, during or shortly after birth.¹⁷ By September, the CDC identified all major routes of transmission and ruled out transmission by casual contact, food, water, air or surfaces.¹⁸