



POZ Awards 2025 / Best in Film or Television

Read about the nominees, then scroll down to vote for your favorite!

October 1, 2025

Welcome to the 10th Annual POZ Awards, spotlighting the best representatives of HIV and AIDS in media and culture.

The POZ editorial staff selects the nominees, but POZ readers choose the winners.

Eligible nominees were active or were presented, published or produced between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025.

Voting is now closed.

BEST IN FILM OR TELEVISION

[Alpha](#)

After her highly acclaimed film *Titane*, director Julia Ducournau followed up with *Alpha*, a body horror film about a 13-year-old girl who obtains a fictional virus while getting a tattoo. As a body horror film, it builds on a rich tradition of horror and sci-fi offerings that use viruses, illness or transformation to explore deeper questions about humanity, including films such as Cronenberg's *The Fly* or even *It Follows*.

"What I remember is the contamination of fear, the shaming of the whole part of a population, and the way society refused to take this on itself and to admit that it concerns all of us," Ducournau told [Vanity Fair](#) of her memories growing up during the earliest days of the AIDS crisis. "We've all tried to protect children, though it's a lost cause — the reactions of fear are everywhere. This is a reflection about how this fear has been transmitted, and the impact it's had on my generation."

[Cashing Out](#)

If you've never heard the term "viatical settlements" — or, perhaps, if you'd heard it before and have since forgotten it — then *Cashing Out* is an in-depth introduction to the concept. The documentary, from director Matt Nadel, chronicles the explosion of a brand-new industry that

coincided the worst days of the AIDS crisis. Viatical settlements were agreements whereby companies or private investors would pay people with AIDS a lump sum to become the beneficiaries of their life-insurance policies. In a sense, these financiers were hoping for people with AIDS to die to get a payout.

The documentary is a multi-layered story, told by several people living with AIDS, as well as Nadel himself, who reveals that his father had been one of the people who bought one of these viatical settlements. “Nadel is evenhanded with these two sides of the narrative,” a review in The [New Yorker](#) reads. “But, ultimately, the film leaves us brokenhearted at the thought of how much it took, and how much it cost, emotionally and otherwise, just to stay alive.”

[Pee-Wee as Himself](#)

There’s no doubt that Pee-Wee Herman is an enduring cultural icon. But, with Pee-Wee as Himself, director Matt Wolf brought us a portrait of the man behind the eccentric character. Though Paul Reubens may have been recognizable because he was Pee-Wee, very few people knew the story behind him. In this two-part documentary, Ford tells Reubens’ story, including the fact that this first partner, the love of his life, was a person who Reubens eventually lost to AIDS. That partner, Guy, was also the basis for many of Pee-Wee’s mannerisms and eccentricities, underscoring that one of American culture’s funniest and most enduring characters is based on the humor of a person living with HIV. Reubens’ story serves as a reminder of the way that the virus is often with us in invisible ways, undergirding much of what we consume, even pop culture.

[Please Hold](#)

In the “unabashedly DIY,” director and activist Alex Juhasz chronicles the memory of two close friends, Jim and Juanita, both of whom died and both of whom requested Juhasz document their final moments. Alongside her fellow AIDS workers, Juhasz makes sense of the weight of memory and of curating the legacies of loved ones. Told across several formats, including VHS, Zoom and iPhone, the film is an examination into the ghosts that follow Juhasz, but also the ones that are all around us.