TRAILER: AIDS Documentary “Countdown to Zero”

November 25, 2015 By Trent Straube

A trailer for HBO’s ‘Vice Special Report: Countdown to Zero’

We all have a zillion things to do on World AIDS Day, which is Tuesday, December 1, 2015, so plan ahead and record this AIDS-related documentary that debuts on HBO that night.

Here’s how the press release describes it:

VICE SPECIAL REPORT: COUNTDOWN TO ZERO goes inside the search for the cure and a preventative vaccine that could eliminate AIDS. Hosted by VICE founders and correspondents Shane Smith and Suroosh Alvi, and featuring interviews with policymakers, activists, researchers and patients leading the quest for an AIDS-free world, including President George W. Bush and Bono, the special debuts on World AIDS Day, TUESDAY, DEC. 1 at 9:00 p.m. (ET/PT), exclusively on HBO. The special will also be available on HBO NOW and HBO GO.

Sounds like must-see TV to me. Except the description leaves me with one big concern. I was very impressed with Vice's series of reports titled "Stopping HIV with the Truvada Revolution" (watch part one at the end of this blog post). It's about Truvada as PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), the daily pill HIV-negative people can take to prevent contracting the virus. So I have high hopes for Vice's HBO special on getting to an AIDS-free world.

HBO has released a series of trailers and clips to promote the World AIDS Day special. Below is one featuring activist Peter Staley--no stranger to POZ readers--talking about the challenges of getting young gay men engaged in HIV prevention.

As usual, everything Staley says is spot-on and I agree a thousand percent, which made me even more jazzed up to see the new documentary.

Then I saw the trailer featuring an interview with President George W. Bush talking about the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Below is that clip:

While I acknowledge PEPFAR has been enormously helpful to fighting the epidemic in Africa, it must also be noted that the program has been and remains hugely problematic because of its ties to far-right Christian groups in American, which has hindered PEPFAR from reaching sex workers as well as men who have sex with men.

For an engrossing--and enraging--look at PEPFAR, check out Andy Kopsa's gangbuster reporting in the recent POZ feature "World of Difference: Questioning taxpayer funding of faith-based groups to fight HIV/AIDS."

I'm hoping this aspect will not be overlooked in the Vice/HBO documentary. Because we must address religious bigotry if we ever expect to get to an AIDS-free world.

And, as promised, here is Part One of the Vice report on Truvada is PrEP:

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/countdown-to-zero-trailers