How to Survive a Plague

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This seems to be the year of the AIDS documentary. It's about time. I'm still shocked by how many twenty-somethings have never heard of ACT UP. We can't let this remarkable history slip away.

First, there is WE WERE HERE, a highly moving retelling of what it was like in San Francisco when the crisis hit. Folks are betting that it will get nominated for the Oscars later this month, and possibly even win for best documentary. Then there's VITO, about the life of Vito Russo, one of my heroes during the ACT UP years. It's making the rounds at film festivals right now. There's also great buzz about UNITED IN ANGER: A HISTORY OF ACT-UP, which is in final editing by Jim Hubbard and Sarah Schulman, and should premier in New York soon.

And finally, Sundance recently announced the 16 documentaries selected for its film festival starting late next week, out of about 1,000 films submitted. One of them is David France's HOW TO SURVIVE A PLAGUE, described as "the untold story of the intensive efforts that turned AIDS into a manageable condition - and the improbable group of (mostly HIV-positive) young men and women whose amazing resilience broke through a time of rampant death and political indifference."

Yours truly was interviewed for this one, and I can't wait to see the final film. I've only seen some short clips thus far, and it looks very powerful. I'm flying out to Park City, Utah to see the premiere, and join the Q&A afterwards. It's my sincere hope that this small flood of AIDS docs will teach younger generations about those remarkable and surreal early years, and inspire future activists for all the work that still needs doing.

Here's David France talking about his film:

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