

Nº032

Doug
Ashford,
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Group
Material

100 Notes – 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken | N°032

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AIDS Timeline

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Doug Ashford & Julie Ault

Group Material’s work was primarily topical and temporal, fueled by our personal and collective observations—and by the social urgencies we perceived. Our horizon was the present tense. In 1989, the curator of the MATRIX Gallery at the Berkeley University Art Museum, Larry Rinder, invited us to address the subject of AIDS after seeing our exhibition at Dia Art Foundation the year before, “AIDS & Democracy: A Case Study.”

At the time, Group Material consisted of Doug Ashford, Julie Ault, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Karen Ramspacher. By 1989, we had witnessed several years of the epidemic with severely inadequate public response. The accumulation of AIDS-related illnesses and deaths of young friends and colleagues informed our daily lives. For our own edification and for public purpose, the group embarked on constructing a history of the conditions that had transformed the epidemic into a full-blown national crisis.

Along with Berkeley intern Richard Meyer, we researched events and developments in several arenas—medical and scientific industries, governmental policies and statistics, grassroots responses and activism within affected communities, and media representations of AIDS, as well as artistic responses and popular culture of the relevant period. To form the exhibition, selected artifacts and documentary material from these fields were joined with artworks by individuals and collectives in a chronological structure. A thick black line bifurcated the display, marking the temporal horizon of the AIDS crisis, beginning with 1979, the year the Centers for Disease Control started tracking cases and deaths due to a new immune-suppressive virus, and extending to the then present, 1989. The increasing number of new AIDS cases and deaths each year appeared on the timeline, and text—information curated by the group from the same research arenas—ran close to the line. Documentary material was keyed to the timeline, as were some of the more directly pertinent artworks, while other indirect and metaphoric works were not anchored to points in time.

At first glance, the timeline format promoted a linear reading; however, once one got involved with the histories and stories and images, cross-referencing became inevitable. *AIDS Timeline*’s ingredients were presented not as disparate elements or facts but as a web of intertwined events that described social processes and demonstrated the connectivity of actions and events.

Virtually all the major social inequities that compromise democracy in the United States were reflected in that decadelong history of AIDS. The group’s arrangement of information posited a history of the political and social conditions in which AIDS was not only allowed but encouraged to become a national crisis, and broadcast some evidential responses made in

the arms of the crisis. The timeline related the widespread stigmatization of people with AIDS, demonstrating the links between representation and judgment and between representation and allocation of resources. Furthermore, it documented the impact that homophobia, racism, heterosexism, and sexism had on the formation of public policy.

Aesthetic practice and social practice merged in *AIDS Timeline*. The project involved layers of collaboration in and beyond the group with both individuals and community advocacy organizations. *AIDS Timeline* proposed models of history writing, curatorial method, artistic practice, and social process, as well as a compound of temporal contexts joined together that reflected the climate of circumstance and perception, the complexity of the period. The exhibition sought at once to contextualize the AIDS crisis and to create a context itself—a didactic exhibit environment that examined recent events to account for present conditions, with the hope of influencing what was to come.

Agency was our horizon, and history—not only that of the 1980s, but history as a continuum extending from earlier than 1979 and going on indefinitely. Chronology as guiding device set a linear horizon and performed an anchoring purpose, acting as a focal point from which viewers’ perspectives could venture. Within such a setup, the horizon is endowed with the double function of systematizing and releasing information. The horizon opened views to what was above and below the timeline. It opened views to the larger set of conditions articulated by the arrangement of information brought into narrative armature, to reveal the far-reaching associations between political and cultural events that render the historical period legible.

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Julie Ault (b. 1957) works as an artist, curator, editor, and writer.

Doug Ashford & Julie Ault

Die Arbeit von Group Material bezog sich in erster Linie auf aktuelle Themen und die Gegenwart und wurde von unseren persönlichen und gemeinschaftlichen Beobachtungen angetrieben – ebenso wie von den gesellschaftlichen Dringlichkeiten, die wir wahrnahmen. Unser Horizont war das Präsens. 1989 wurden wir von Larry Rinder, dem Kurator der MATRIX Gallery am Berkeley University Art Museum, dazu eingeladen, uns mit dem Thema AIDS zu beschäftigen, nachdem er im Vorjahr in der Dia Art Foundation unsere Ausstellung »AIDS & Democracy: A Case Study« gesehen hatte.

Die damaligen Mitglieder von Group Material waren Doug Ashford, Julie Ault, Felix Gonzalez-Torres und Karen Ramsbacher. 1989 blickten wir bereits auf mehrere Jahre der Epidemie zurück, in denen diese zutiefst unangemessene öffentliche Reaktionen ausgelöst hatte. Unser Alltag war geprägt durch immer häufigere Erkrankungen infolge von AIDS und Todesfälle unter jungen Freunden und Kollegen. Zu unserer eigenen Erbauung und für öffentliche Zwecke begann die Gruppe, eine Geschichte der Umstände zu konstruieren, unter denen sich die Epidemie in eine ausgewachsene Krise transformiert hatte.

Zusammen mit dem Berkeley-Praktikanten Richard Meyer untersuchten wir die Ereignisse und Entwicklungen an verschiedenen Schauplätzen – in den Bereichen von Medizin und Wissenschaft, Regierungspolitik und Statistik, Graswurzelbewegungen und Aktivismus in den betroffenen Communities sowie Darstellungen von AIDS in den Medien, aber auch die künstlerischen Resonanzen und die Populärkultur des betreffenden Zeitraums. Bei der Gestaltung der Ausstellung wurden ausgewählte Artefakte und dokumentarische Materialien aus diesen Gebieten mit Kunstwerken von Individuen und Kollektiven im Rahmen einer chronologischen Struktur zusammengebracht. Die Präsentation wurde durch eine dicke schwarze Linie zweigeteilt, die den zeitlichen Horizont der AIDS-Krise markierte; diese begann 1979, als die Centers for Disease Control begannen, Erkrankungen und Todesfällen aufgrund eines neuen Immundefizienz-Virus nachzugehen, und reichte bis in die damalige Gegenwart, 1989. Die alljährliche wachsende Zahl neuer AIDS-Erkrankungen und Todesfälle erschien auf der Zeitleiste, und parallel zu ihr verliefen Texte – von der Gruppe kuratierte Informationen zu den gleichen Forschungsfeldern. Die Zeitleiste wurde ergänzt durch dokumentarisches Material und einige unmittelbar auf das Thema bezogene Kunstwerke, während andere, indirekte und metaphorische Arbeiten nicht zeitlich verankert wurden.

Auf den ersten Blick förderte das Format der Zeitleiste eine lineare Lesweise; sobald man sich jedoch in die Historien und Erzählungen und

Bilder vertiefte, wurden Querverweise unvermeidlich. Die Bestandteile der *AIDS Timeline* wurden nicht als grundverschiedene Elemente oder Fakten präsentiert, sondern als ein Geflecht miteinander verknüpfter Ereignisse, das gesellschaftliche Prozesse beschrieb und den Vernetzungsgrad von Handlungen und Ereignissen aufzeigte.

Diese damals ein Jahrzehnt währende Geschichte von AIDS spiegelte praktisch alle bedeutenden gesellschaftlichen Ungerechtigkeiten wider, die die Demokratie in den Vereinigten Staaten beeinträchtigen. Die Anordnung von Informationen, die die Gruppe vorgenommen hatte, postulierte eine Geschichte der politischen und sozialen Verhältnisse, die nicht nur zuließen, sondern begünstigten, dass AIDS zu einer nationalen Krise wurde, und veröffentlichte einige entlarvende Reaktionen, die unter dem Eindruck der Krise aufkamen. Die Zeitleiste informierte über die verbreitete Stigmatisierung von Menschen mit AIDS und zeigte die Zusammenhänge zwischen ihrer Repräsentation und Beurteilung sowie zwischen ihrer Repräsentation und der Bereitstellung von Ressourcen auf. Darüber hinaus dokumentierte sie den Einfluss, den Homophobie, Rassismus, Heterosexismus und Sexismus auf die Herausbildung der öffentlichen Ordnung ausübten.

In *AIDS Timeline* verschmolzen ästhetische Praxis und gesellschaftliche Praxis miteinander. Das Projekt erforderte vielschichtige Formen der Kooperation innerhalb und außerhalb der Gruppe mit Einzelpersonen und Interessenverbänden. *AIDS Timeline* schlug Modelle für Geschichtsschreibung, kuratorische Methoden, künstlerische Praxis und gesellschaftliche Prozesse vor, ebenso wie eine Verknüpfung temporärer Kontexte, die zusammen das Klima der Verhältnisse und der Wahrnehmung und die Komplexität jener Zeit widerspiegeln. Die Ausstellung zielte darauf ab, die AIDS-Krise zu kontextualisieren und zugleich einen eigenen Kontext herzustellen – ein didaktisches Ausstellungs-Environment, das aktuelle Ereignisse untersuchte, um über gegenwärtige Verhältnisse Rechenschaft abzulegen, verbunden mit der Hoffnung, zukünftige Entwicklungen zu beeinflussen.

Handlungsmacht war unser Horizont, ebenso wie die Geschichte – nicht nur die Geschichte der 1980er Jahre, sondern auch die Geschichte als ein Kontinuum, das vor 1979 begann und sich unendlich fortsetzt. Die Chronologie als Leitfaden bildete einen linearen Horizont und diente als Anker; sie fungierte als Blickpunkt, von dem aus sich die Betrachter neue Perspektiven erschließen konnten. Innerhalb einer solchen Anordnung erhält der Horizont die Doppelfunktion, Informationen zu systematisieren und freizugeben. Der Horizont eröffnete Ausblicke auf das, was oberhalb und unterhalb der Zeitleiste lag. Er bot Ausblicke auf die umfassenderen Verhältnisse, die sich durch die Anordnung von Informationen in einem narrativen Gerüst ausdrückten, um die weitreichenden Zusammenhänge zwischen politischen und kulturellen Ereignissen aufzudecken, die den historischen Zeitabschnitt interpretierbar machen.

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Group Material
AIDS Timeline

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The following chronology is an attempt to trace the development of the AIDS crisis in the United States and contextualize its development socially and politically. Like any representation of history, this project is subjective in that it includes certain information and excludes other information. The juxtaposition of facts in AIDS Timeline reveals how government, medical and media inaction compounded the crisis and how the communities most affected by AIDS have worked to diminish it.

1979

Pope John Paul II visits the United States and reaffirms traditional Roman Catholic teaching.

"Real People" a television program on NBC, is the network's newest hit. A hybrid between news and talk-show, it examines the "strange and unpredictable, the heroic and fallible in human nature." The show traces the believe-it-or-not escapades of seemingly ordinary Americans.

98% of all American homes contain a television set, 60% of which are color.

The Institute for the Protection of Gay and Lesbian Youth, later known as The Hetrick Martin Institute, is founded in New York City.

Dan White kills San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and openly gay City Supervisor Harvey Milk. White, a former policeman and City Supervisor, is convicted only of the reduced charge of manslaughter. His defense claims that due to the over-eating of Twinkies he suffered "diminished mental capacity." Mass demonstrations, the "White Night Riots," erupt in the streets of San Francisco after the verdict is announced.

An estimated 120,000 people participate in the first March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights.

The U.S. supported Shah of Iran is deposed. The Ayatollah Khomeini takes over.

1980

This year's top grossing film is "The Empire Strikes Back" directed by George Lucas. It is a science fiction story of the adventures of a fatherless son as he masters 'the force' needed to defeat an evil empire.

Dr. Mathilde Krim, an internist with a specialty in sexually transmitted diseases begins noticing immunologically unusual patients. The following year Dr. Krim is one of the many people who first report the new diseases. She will later become a founder of AmFAR, the American Foundation for AIDS Research.

In the electoral campaigns of this year the Republican Party stresses "smaller" government, trying to appeal to people's desire for less governmental restraints on their daily lives. The party proposes to cut social services and promote the further privatization of our resources.

Ronald Reagan is elected the 40th president of the United States of America. This is described by many as a "landslide" even though Reagan wins only 27% of the registered vote.

Three American Maryknoll nuns are found raped and shot to death in a shallow grave in El Salvador. American military support for the ruling oligarchy is temporarily suspended—only to be reinstated shortly thereafter.

1981

After 444 days in captivity, 51 members of the American Foreign Service who have been held as hostages by Iranian students in Tehran are released.

Early in 1981 the staff at the Centers for Disease Control, the federal agency responsible for recording public health trends, begins noticing that there are unusual cases of PCP occurring in New York and California. PCP (Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia) is a rare form of immune suppressed pneumonia.

President Ronald Reagan proposes to slash federal education, welfare, housing and health budgets. In this budget the National Institutes of Health, the federal agency responsible for testing drugs and treatments, is cut by \$127 million.

The Sentinel, a San Francisco gay-community newspaper, publishes a small article on June 26, entitled "Unique Pneumonia Strikes Gay Men." The article reports, "Health officials said recently that there has been a mysterious outbreak of pneumonia among gay males."

Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), an extremely rare form of cancer, has been diagnosed in 26 homosexual men. Medical officials are mystified by the occurrence of this disease in men under the age of 50—a group virtually unknown to have ever had KS. KS becomes known as the "gay cancer."

"Poppers," or amyl nitrate, is considered a possible cause of "gay cancer" in an effort to find a correlation between lifestyle and transmission of the disease.

An article by Bobbi Campbell R.N. is published in the San Francisco *Sentinel*. This is the first public testimonial by a person with Kaposi's sarcoma. That same issue compares governmental and medical response to AIDS with these agencies' earlier responses to the outbreak of Legionnaires disease. In 1976, the federal government instituted emergency measures to find the cause of Legionnaires which had affected 29 people in Philadelphia. Comparatively, there has been no federal response to ongoing "gay cancer" cases.

The media portrays the early patients with the disease as promiscuous homosexual males. The syndrome is partly blamed on "lifestyle" or sexual preference. The risk of sexually transmitted diseases and the transmission of a "new" agent are linked at this stage.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), initiates the reporting of KS (Kaposi's sarcoma) and PCP (Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia) nationwide.

Bobbi Campbell becomes the "KS Posterboy," launching a one-man fundraising effort to establish a support group for "gay cancer" patients. His posters displayed in the windows of a San Francisco drugstore are among the earliest educational campaigns about the new disease.

AIDS, as an acronym for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome replaces earlier naming of the syndrome: GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency), CAID (Community Acquired Immune Deficiency), AID (Acquired Immune Deficiency).

The Shanti Project in San Francisco, a death counseling organization founded seven years earlier, begins a support group for Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) patients.

The Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) is founded in New York City. GMHC is a grass roots organization of volunteers which seeks to provide information and support services through its buddy program, education, counseling, legal services, and advocacy for people with AIDS.

A request for \$833,800 made by Dr. Jim Curran from the National Institutes of Health annual budget to study the new "gay cancer" is denied.

1982

Nearly two years since the first warnings of an epidemic, CBS anchorman Dan Rather presents one of the first network news reports on AIDS. His lead-in to the story is, "You rarely hear a thing about it. At first it seemed to strike only one segment of the population..."

The newly formed GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) organizes a benefit dance called "The Showers." The event is held at the Paradise Garage. \$53,000 is raised for research and education.

This year's Reagan Budget calls for the slashing of at least 1,000 grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the federal agency that controls medical research and health education.

The San Francisco city government allocates \$450,000 to finance the first AIDS clinic and the first locally funded educational efforts.

Seven people die from cyanide laced Tylenol. Within 3 weeks, the Centers for Disease Control spends \$10 million and puts 1,163 people to work investigating Tylenol that might be affected. Within 6 weeks the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) restructures the packaging of non-prescription drugs. The *New York Times* writes one story every day for the 31 days of the scare.

Comparatively, only \$1 million is spent to research AIDS since its recognition; AIDS drug trials are delayed due to lack of personnel; and The *New York Times* has written only 3 stories on AIDS to date.

At this time there is roughly one death everyday from AIDS in this country.

The first National AIDS Forum is held in Dallas, Texas, as part of the First National Lesbian and Gay Leadership Conference.

A candlelight march is held in San Francisco as one of the earliest mass demonstrations of outrage at the lack of response by medical and governmental agencies to the progression of AIDS.

"Homosexual Plague Strikes New Victims" is the title of an article published in the August 19th *Newsweek* magazine. The piece is inspired by news from the National Cancer Institutes describing growing evidence that hemophiliacs are showing AIDS-related symptoms. The article reports, "the homosexual plague has started spilling over into the general population."

Michael Callen co-founds an organization in New York, called Gay Men With AIDS. Their stated goal is to "support each other by sharing our personal experiences, our strength and our hope."

The first *Wall Street Journal* article on AIDS is printed only after 23 heterosexual men and women are diagnosed with the disease.

Most investigators are convinced in 1982 that the cause of AIDS is an infectious agent, most likely a virus, and not the result of exposure to toxic substances or other environmental or genetic factors.

1983

The Orphan Drug Act passes in Congress. This allows pharmaceutical companies to deduct up to 63% of the costs of clinical drug trials from taxes, as well as giving them a 7 year monopoly to encourage development and manufacture of drugs that treat diseases which affect so few people that the cost of developing the drug far outweighs the potential profits.

The *New York Native* publishes an article by Larry Kramer titled, "1112 Deaths and Counting." The article describes the inaction of governmental and medical institutions as the AIDS epidemic grows into a national crisis. He calls upon the gay community to take action against AIDS.

At the second AIDS Forum at the National Lesbian/Gay Health Conference in Denver, the People With AIDS self-empowerment movement is founded. A group of PWAs and PW/ARCs (People With AIDS Related Complex) from around the country produce a statement condemning the label of victims; making a set of recommendations for health care professionals, and putting forth a list of rights for People With AIDS.

Within a year after discovery of the AIDS virus, a second viral subtype, HIV2 is identified.

Massive anti-nuclear marches take place in London, Bonn, Paris, Washington D.C., Tokyo and New York where close to 1 million people demonstrate for the international reduction of nuclear weapons.

Dr. Joseph Sonnabend, a progressive medical practitioner, reports at a scientific meeting on AIDS that there may be no single cause for the disease. He, among others, has adopted a theory that there might be co-factors responsible for the syndrome.

In another attempt at categorizing and stigmatizing people with AIDS, the media and the medical establishment coin the term, "high risk groups" as including: male homosexuals, Haitians, hemophiliacs and intravenous drug users. These groups of people are asked not to donate blood.

The Centers for Disease Control reports that there is evidence of immune deficiency among the female partners of males with AIDS. This suggests that the disease may be sexually transmitted between heterosexuals.

Abbott Labs, Inc., gets federal Food and Drug Administration approval for the blood test that will detect antibodies to HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), believed to be the cause of AIDS.

The city of San Francisco allocates \$2.1 million to develop an outpatient clinic and inpatient ward for AIDS patients. At this time the city of San Francisco AIDS expenditures exceed total federal funds allocated for this disease.

1984

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) approaches Lyphomed drug company, the manufacturers of a drug called I.V. Pentamidine used to treat a rare type of pneumonia. The CDC asks Lyphomed to manufacture I.V. Pentamidine to treat AIDS-related

pneumonia, PCP. PCP is the leading cause of death in People With AIDS. The company hesitates because there are "no potential profits" in so small a market.

William Buckley Jr., editor of *The National Review* publishes an article for his syndicated column in which he states, "Everyone detected with AIDS should be tattooed on the upper forearm, to protect common needle-users, and on the buttocks to prevent the victimization of other homosexuals."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that AIDS can be spread heterosexually and that it can be transmitted even before a person shows outward manifestations of the disease.

Dr. Robert Gallo, head of the AIDS division of the National Institutes of Health claims to have discovered the cause of AIDS by isolating a virus he terms HTLV3. This is almost a year after French researchers at the Pasteur Institute announced the discovery of a similar virus, LAV. Gallo's claim causes a controversy over the crediting of the discovery of the virus. The medical community agrees to call the virus HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

The city government of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, starts an exemplary needle exchange program distributing clean needles from vans to drug users. The exchange of blood, through shared "works," (needles, syringes, etc.) can put I.V. drug users at risk for contracting HIV.

A National Cancer Institute laboratory confirms that the antiviral drug AZT (Azidothymidine) slows replication of HIV in the human immune system. AZT was originally developed by the U.S. government as a cancer drug in 1964.

There is no category for lesbian sex in official HIV transmission categories, yet as early as 1984 there are documented cases of woman-to-woman transmission. This exclusion furthers lesbian invisibility and the mistaken notion that lesbians are protected from infection. It is proven that HIV can be present in vaginal secretions as well as menstrual blood.

1985

With much fanfare, the Coca-Cola Company begins distributing its "New Coke." Within weeks, grassroots groups organize to bring back "old" Coke. Coca-Cola company responds to this nationwide campaign by inventing "Coca-Cola Classic."

Prostitutes are among the first groups to be tested for HIV, the virus thought to cause AIDS. The results reveal that most prostitutes who test positive for HIV antibodies contract the virus through the use of shared I.V. drug "works." Most prostitutes use condoms to practice safer-sex. Despite these facts, the media and the public continue to scapegoat sexworkers as vectors of illness.

Rock Hudson discloses that he has AIDS. President Reagan, who has never said the word AIDS in any public address, telephones to wish Hudson well. The American media quadruples its coverage of the syndrome.

Hospitals and blood drives around the country begin testing donated blood for HIV antibodies.

The PWA Coalition is formed in New York City. It is created by and for People With AIDS and People With AIDS Related Complex (ARC), to promote self-empowerment. In June, the first issue of the *PWA Coalition Newslines*, a monthly newsletter by and for PWAs and PW/ARCs is published. The *Newslines* provides a forum for diverse opinions and includes treatment information, feature articles, memorials and a resource list.

Burroughs Wellcome PLC, a British drug conglomerate, begins testing AZT (Azidothymidine, an anti-viral medication previously developed with federal funds) on thirty-three patients with AIDS.

The hysterical fear of AIDS "contamination" in the classroom causes school boards across the country to bar children with AIDS from attending classes. This continues over the next four years even though the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have issued guidelines indicating that everyday physical contact will not transmit the disease.

After hosting two successful AIDS benefits in New York and Los Angeles, Elizabeth Taylor is named National Chairperson of the newly formed National AIDS Research Foundation, later to become AmFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research).

Assistant Secretary of Defense, William E. Mayer, announces that the department will screen all prospective military recruits for possible HIV infection. He later decides to implement screening of all 2.1 million military personnel.

Two protesters chain themselves to the Federal Office Building in San Francisco demanding that more federal money be allocated for AIDS research; and that ARC (AIDS Related Complex) patients receive the same benefits as AIDS patients.

The New York City Department of Substance Abuse Services approaches ADAPT (Association of Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment) to urge the group to formulate an organized response to the growing number of intravenous drug users at risk for HIV infection. ADAPT proposes a pilot project to distribute free, sterile needles to addicts on the streets.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors votes unanimously to outlaw discrimination against People With AIDS/ARC.

University of California researchers demonstrate that HIV is blocked by a condom during sexual intercourse.

A New York City Department of Health AIDS staff person remembers: "We were making the case for a subway poster campaign and I'll never forget being told by a supervisor: 'We don't need that. Anybody who needs to know about AIDS already knows about it.'"

American commercial television's first dramatic representation of an AIDS story, "An Early Frost," is shown on NBC. The central crisis of the story is that a young man develops AIDS and must reveal his homosexuality to his parents.

JAMA, (Journal of the American Medical Association) publishes an editorial by Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of AIDS research at the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, explaining the results of two studies done on household contact and AIDS. Rather than recognizing perinatal transmission of HIV, Fauci mistakenly warns of the possible risk of casual contact. The Associated Press runs a "household contact" story over their newswire, beginning a national hysteria which extends to the outfitting of many police officers with rubber gloves.

The original Centers for Disease Control (CDC) definition of AIDS becomes more specific, outlining particular illnesses called "opportunistic infections" that indicate a suppressed immune system related to AIDS.

The Great Republic Insurance Company, and the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, issue an "AIDS Profile" to their agents, instructing them to earmark applications from "single males without dependents that engage in occupations that do not require physical exertion." These applicants are usually denied insurance.

In a November press conference President Reagan, in response to a question, utters the word "AIDS" for the first time in his presidency.

1986

The National Security Council and the C.I.A. implement illegal covert operations in which arms are sold to Iran. Profits from this sale are directed to the Nicaraguan Contras.

Despite conclusive medical evidence that AIDS is not casually transmitted, the Justice Department rules that Federal contractors who fire People With AIDS because of fear of contagion cannot be challenged under the U.S. Civil Rights Law protecting the handicapped.

The song, "That's What Friends Are For," written by Carole Bayer-Sager and Burt Bacharach, recorded by Dionne Warwick, Elton John, Gladys Knight and Stevie Wonder, becomes a top pop single. Released as a fundraiser for AIDS research, it raises \$750,000.

Four years after it is first suggested, physicians begin experimenting with a new form of a drug called Pentamidine. The new form is less toxic than I.V. Pentamidine, which causes severe side effects. Pentamidine prevents PCP, the leading cause of death among People with AIDS.

Delta Airlines refuses to carry PWA Mark Sigers.

The Public Health Service adds AIDS to the list of "dangerous contagious diseases" which prohibit entry into the United States. Subsequently, many visitors are detained by immigration.

Once diagnosed with an opportunistic infection, or full-blown AIDS, the average lifespan of a male PWA is 18 months; for women it is 9 months and for I.V. drug users 6 months.

Between 1982 and 1986, the proportion of women with AIDS increases from 12% to 26% of total cases nationwide. Even this statistic is low because most women with AIDS die undiagnosed. They have infections specific to women such as severe vaginitis, pelvic inflammatory disease, or cervical cancer, all unrecognized as AIDS related by the Centers for Disease Control.

Lyndon LaRouch endorses California State Proposition 64 which would change the health code to require citizens to report anyone they suspect of having AIDS, restrict the movement of PWAs, and abolish state funding for AIDS programs. It is voted on and defeated.

President Ronald Reagan gives his first public speech on AIDS. He says that the administration is committed to finding a cure and asks Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to prepare a "major report" on AIDS. Congressman Henry Waxman terms Reagan's pronouncement "outrageous," noting that Reagan's budget, made public just days before, includes reductions in spending for AIDS research.

Reagan asks for \$10 million cut in the Public Health Service's AIDS effort as well as massive cuts in Medicaid.

The Supreme Court, in *Bowers v. Hardwick*, rules (5-4) that the states can outlaw sodomy and other homosexual sex acts, even if conducted by consenting adults in private. Justice Blackmun writes in the dissenting opinion that he sees "no justification for invading the houses, hearts and minds of citizens who choose to live their lives differently."

The New York City Health Department reports that AIDS has become the leading cause of death of men ages 30-44, and women ages 25-29.

A National Academy of Science report charges that the U.S. government response to AIDS has been "dangerously inadequate" and calls for \$2 billion per year for education and research. Ronald Reagan signs legislation that provides only \$410 million for AIDS research.

A single B-2 bomber costs over \$500 million.

The federal government finally begins to deal with AIDS treatment and drug trials. But AIDS drug trials, like many others, exclude women, people of color, poor people, people in rural areas, I.V. drug users, hemophiliacs, prisoners, and children, many of whom die from preventable and treatable illness.

1987

President Reagan orders mandatory AIDS testing for all immigrants and federal prisoners. His Education Secretary, William Bennet, presses for even more extensive mandatory testing while Surgeon General C. Everett Koop joins most public health authorities in opposing this as a wasteful process.

Senator Jesse Helms is "sickened" by GMHC's safer-sex comic books, designed to reduce the risk of HIV transmission. Helms proposes to prohibit any funds that would provide educational materials that depict or condone homosexual, any sexual activities

outside of marriage, and the use of illegal intravenous drugs. A version of this amendment passes 94 to 2.

Explicit materials targeted to specific audiences, have been proven to be effective in changing risk behavior.

"To me that does not make sense. It just does not make sense. And if we do not educate them as to how to avoid it and what to do about it, and some of these funds will go for that, then my gosh, what are we doing here? We are just going to subject this whole country to a widespread pandemic or epidemic of AIDS? That is what we are doing right now." Republican Senator Orrin G. Hatch, speaking against the Helms Amendment.

The Centers for Disease Control revises the AIDS definition again. The new definition includes HIV encephalopathy, wasting syndrome, and other indicator diseases that are diagnosed presumptively, without confirmation of lab evidence of opportunistic infections.

Randy Shilts' book, *And the Band Played On* is distributed by St. Martin's press. It quickly becomes a national bestseller. The book chronicles the unfolding of the AIDS epidemic as a medical, political and cultural crisis from 1978 to 1985.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of National Institutes of Allergies and Infectious Disease, testifies that he still has not begun testing aerosol Pentamidine for lack of a single staff person even though 13 months earlier this agency declared Pentamidine as a high priority for treating and preventing PCP (*Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia). 60% of PWAs die of PCP.

Between 1984 and 1987 the total U.S. Defense Department Budget increased by \$33.5 billion whereas the total Health and Human Services Department budget decreased by \$143 million.

Senator Danforth Quayle is among the handful of legislators who vote against a federal program that would provide AZT to people who could not afford it.

Extensive and conclusive medical evidence proves that HIV is not casually spread. It is only transmitted through needle sharing, blood transfusion, or unprotected sexual contact. Despite these facts police officers all around the nation insist on wearing rubber gloves when arresting AIDS activists.

Condom manufacturers produce their first television commercials and all three major national networks refuse to broadcast them.

The Names Project is founded by Cleve Jones in San Francisco. Thousands of people begin making hand-made panels for their loved ones who have died from AIDS, resulting in the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt. The quilt is displayed at the 1987 Gay and Lesbian March on Washington.

Connecticut Congressman Stuart McKinney dies of AIDS related illness.

AZT(Azidothymidine) is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). AZT slows HIV replication and is the only drug that can be legally prescribed by doctors in the United States to treat AIDS. It is also very toxic. Many patients (40-80%) become intolerant after a year or so. The manufacturer, Burroughs Wellcome, is granted a 7-year marketing license and takes out a patent that extends its monopoly of the drug for seventeen years.

Despite the fact that the government (the National Cancer Institute) actually developed the drug in 1964, gave the monopoly to Burroughs Wellcome to entice them to produce it, and provided their first raw materials necessary to make the drug, Burroughs Wellcome charges close to \$10,000 per year/per person for AZT.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops releases a statement on AIDS saying they can tolerate education including condom use if emphasis is placed on abstinence of sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Controversy develops over this statement as some clergy, including Cardinal O'Connor in New York City, refuse to recognize that a large portion of Catholics have sex, hetero and homo, outside of marriage.

For fiscal year 1988, the Reagan administration requests \$5.2 billion for the Strategic Defense Initiative, STAR WARS. This represents only about 1.5% of the total Defense Department budget.

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) is founded in New York City. ACT UP describes itself as "a diverse non-partisan group of individuals united by anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis."

ACT UP's first major action is a demonstration on Wall Street, organized to call attention to drug companies' profiteering from AIDS. ACT UP applies pressure on government agencies and drug companies to re-evaluate and modify their procedures for approval of drugs, treatments, and access.

The number of American women 15 to 44 years of age dying from AIDS rose 75% between 1986 and 1988. AIDS ranks eighth among all causes of death for women in this age range. Black women are 9 times more likely than white women to die of AIDS. Educational efforts aimed at women in general to prevent HIV transmission remain scarce.

Burroughs Wellcome reduces the cost of AZT by 20% to assuage critics. Even as they do this they raise the price of Zovirax, a drug for herpes, by a similar amount.

1988

Only 27 private multinational corporations control 90% of all major U.S. media, including, television, newspapers, publishing and radio. This is reduced from 46 such companies in 1981.

Yolanda Serrano, ADAPT's executive director, announces that ADAPT will distribute sterile needles to I.V. drug users in NYC to prevent the spread of HIV (through blood left in shared needles), as a form of civil disobedience. In response, the Department of Health freezes ADAPT's money and shuts down the office for 48 hours. A month later Governor Mario Cuomo revises his stand and supports experimental needle exchange.

Premarital HIV screening is proposed in some states. It is estimated to cost approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000 per case found, with 26% of all confirmed cases being false-negatives. Utah will withhold a marriage license if you are found to be HIV positive.

Senator Dan Quayle of Indiana is selected by Vice-President Bush as his running mate for the Republican ticket. In the past year, Quayle has voted five times to restrict the content of educational material on AIDS, and has opposed a plan to supply AZT to impoverished patients.

Congressman William Dannemeyer endorses California State Proposition 102 which would make anonymous testing illegal and force those who test HIV positive to turn in the names of their sexual partners. It is defeated by a margin of more than one to two.

As the market for AIDS drugs increases, Lyphomed drug company competes for federal drug approval of aerosol Pentamidine which prevents PCP pneumonia. The company raises the cost of I.V. Pentamidine by 300% while the cost to actually make the drug drops from \$6.00 to \$1.80 per dose.

Two thousand AIDS activists "seize control" of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to protest the laggardly pace of AIDS drugs approval process. As a result of this demonstration the government accelerates the approval process by an average of three years.

A brochure describing AIDS transmission is prepared by Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, and mailed to every American household, 7 years after the epidemic was first recognized.

\$193 million is allocated in this year's federal budget for military marching bands.

The DeSoto County School District of Arcadia, Florida, bans two young brothers with AIDS from attending school. Only after a victorious federal court suit are they readmitted. Two months later their family's home is burned down by unidentified arsonists. The family is forced to relocate to another city.

Ryan White, a grade school student with AIDS, and his family, move out of Kokomo, Indiana, to escape the ostracism in his hometown. He had been prevented from attending public school for two years.

AIDS spending for federal, state and local monies added up to \$4.4 billion which is 8% of the total health spending in this country.

Admiral James Watkins, (retired) Chairman of the Presidential Commission on AIDS, states, "...discrimination is the most significant obstacle to progress against the disease because patients would not cooperate in providing data if they feared for their jobs or homes." Watkins said the Federal government has not provided sufficient support in the fight against AIDS.

In reference to Nicholas Nixon's Portrait of People With AIDS, exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, ACT UP states: "...in portraying PWAs as people to be pitied or feared, as people alone and lonely, we believe that this work perpetuates general misconceptions about AIDS without addressing the realities of those of us living everyday with this crisis as PWAs or as people who love PWAs. We believe that the representation of People With AIDS affects not only how the viewers will perceive PWAs outside the museum, but, ultimately, crucial issues of AIDS funding, legislation, and education."

Only 89 patients have received Trimetrexate, a drug believed to be more potent against PCP than Bactrim or I.V. Pentamidine. But it is still costly, and since AIDS drug trials like many others, exclude women, people of color, poor people, people in rural areas, I.V.

drug users, hemophiliacs, prisoners, and children, many of these people still die from a preventable and treatable illness.

1989

Medical data reveals that early intervention for HIV positive people can delay the onset of full-blown AIDS. Many AIDS organizations now endorse testing. However, questions are raised about confidentiality and discrimination, as well as the practicality of testing when there are so few plans of treatment available, accessible and affordable.

Introduced by ACT UP, the "parallel track" program allows patients who are intolerant to the prescribed treatment to receive an experimental AIDS drug outside of a clinical trial. ddI, only the second drug to slow the spread of infection, is made available through parallel track, only for patients who have severe side effects from AZT. ddI is not covered by insurance or medicaid.

Art works by Andres Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe spark a controversy in Congress, leading to restrictive legislation forced upon the National Endowment for the Arts. The legislation provides that "none of the funds authorized...may be used to promote, disseminate or produce materials which in the judgment of the NEA...may be considered obscene, including, but not limited to, depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the sexual exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts and which, taken as whole, do not have serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value."

500,000 people march on Washington in a "March for Women's Lives" in support of safe, legal, and accessible abortion.

In 1989, only 4 of the 100 current drug trials are designed for children. Only these test a drug against a placebo. The placebo travels through an I.V., possibly introducing infections to immune suppressed children. Most children with AIDS are in the public health care system with no advocates to fight for their lives.

The Supreme Court decides in Webster v. Reproductive Health Services to return the right to restrict abortion to the states, opening debate over a woman's right to control her own body.

"Optimistically, AIDS will push this country into getting universal health insurance." Dr. Stephen Joseph, New York City Commissioner of Health.

ACT UP demonstrators interrupt trading on the New York Stock Exchange for 4 1/2 minutes. The demonstrators call for traders to sell Burroughs Wellcome stock because the drug company profiteers from the AIDS crisis. Simultaneous protests occur in New York, London, and San Francisco. Shortly thereafter Burroughs Wellcome lowers the price of AZT (the only federally approved drug that slows the replication of HIV) by 20%.

ACT UP and WHAM (Women's Health Action and Mobilization) organize the "Stop the Church" demonstration. 5,000 people gather at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City to protest the Catholic church's policy on AIDS and women's reproductive rights. Protesters charge the Catholic church with preventing AIDS education in schools, blocking access to women's health clinics, denouncing safer sex, and denying the effectiveness of condoms and clean needle use as AIDS preventative measures.

In response to grassroots activism, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approves aerosol Pentamidine for prevention of AIDS related pneumonia (PCP). This is the first time a drug has been approved because of community-based research.

The opening session of the Fifth International AIDS Conference in Montreal is taken over by PWAs and AIDS activists calling for more inclusion of People With AIDS in research. ACT UP AIDS activists release "A National AIDS Treatment Research Agenda" which outlines principles for conducting clinical trials: involving PWAs in trial design, emphasizing drugs for Opportunistic Infections, creating more flexible protocols, broadening entry requirements, avoiding use of placebos, and establishing criteria other than death rate for judging whether drugs are effective.

Average lifetime medical costs for a person with AIDS from diagnosis to death is about \$93,000. A conservative government estimate states that a fifth of those infected with HIV have no insurance at all.

A study sponsored by the insurance industry shows that 37 million people, nearly 18% of the U.S. population, have no medical insurance.

26% of adolescents who were diagnosed with AIDS in 1989 contracted HIV through heterosexual intercourse. AIDS cases among 15 year olds in New York City increased by 40% between 1987 and 1989.

According to *JAMA (Journal of American Medical Association)* there have been 50-100 prosecutions for HIV transmission brought against HIV infected persons for sexual contact, spitting, biting, splattering of blood, or donating blood. In the military, violations of a "safe sex" order range in charges from disobeying a military order to assault with a deadly weapon and attempted murder.

Partnership for the Homeless projects up to 30,000 homeless People With AIDS by 1993 in New York City. Yet the city government has a plan to provide only 800 beds for homeless PWAs by 1991. At this time, there are an estimated 8,000-10,000 PWAs living on the streets, with only 74 beds currently available.

Contract tracing, requesting a list of sexual and I.V. drug user contracts, is urged by Dr. Stephen Joseph, Health Commissioner of New York City. Contract tracing has been denounced by many health officials including Dr. Joseph's superior, Dr. David Axelrod, New York State Commissioner of Health, as being costly and draining public health resources that could be used for treatment and prevention.

Pentamidine, one of the best preventative treatments for PCP pneumonia, increased in cost for a year supply from \$25 in 1984 to \$200 in 1989.

100 Notes – 100 Thoughts / 100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken

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