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THEY ARE KILLING US

By Larry Kramer

One by one we are
being picked off by the enemy.

They are killing us.

I don't think you are
going to like what I am going to
say. It is the last time I am going
to say it. I'm making my fare-

(Continued on page 58)

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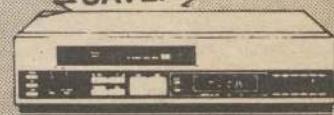
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-well appearance. I am not overly tired. I am certainly not suffering from burnout. I have a lot of piss and vinegar left in me—too much in fact. No, I'm not tired.

Not physically tired, at any rate. I am, of course, as are you, very tired of many things. I am tired of what *they* are doing to us. I am tired of what *they* aren't doing for us. I am tired of seeing so many of my friends die—I'm exceptionally tired of that, as I know you are too.

I'm also tired of people coming up to me on the street and saying "Thank you for what you're doing and saying." They mean it as a compliment, I know. But now I scream back, "Why aren't you doing it and saying it, too?" Why are there so few people out there screaming and yelling? You're dying too!

I'm telling you they are killing us! We are being picked off one by one and half the men reading this could be dead in five years and you are all still sitting on your asses like weaklings; and therefore we, the gay community, are not strong enough and our organizations are not strong enough and we are going to die for it!

I have come to the terrible realization that I believe this gay community of ours has a death wish and that we are going to die because we refuse to take responsibilities for our own lives.

Yes, most of all, I'm tired

of you. I'm tired of the death wish of the gay community. I'm tired of our coluding in our own genocide. I'm tired of you, by your own passivity, actively participating in your own genocide.

You do not have to have AIDS to acquire a system deficient and immune.

How many of you have given a thousand dollars or more at any one time to any gay organization or gay charity? Ten thousand? (For the rich readers: one hundred thousand dollars? A million?)

How many of you have spent at least an hour a week volunteering for a gay organization? Ten hours?

How many of you have left anything in your wills to anything gay?

And if you don't like any of the gay organizations, how many of you have spent

... half the men reading this could be dead in five years and you are all still sitting on your asses like weaklings...

how much time to make any of them better? Instead of just bitching them into further weakness. Or helped raise them money to make themselves better?

How many of you have bothered to consider that by raising \$80,000 a year you could fund a lobbyist in Washington, to fight for us all year long—to join with a network of other gay lobbyists, paid for by groups in other cities, so that we could have as many lobbyists as General Motors or the National Rifle Association, or the National Council of Churches or the American Medical Association, all of whom get what *they* want?

Is it such a big deal to get a group together to raise \$80,000 to save your lives? (Did anyone notice that when Paul Popham died, he asked that contributions be made to AIDS Action Council, a lobbying group, and not Gay Men's Health Crisis, which he co-founded, and in whose ability to do anything but look after funerals he had lost confidence and faith?)

How many of you have written consistently or even irregularly to an elected official or testified to an official hearing on the subject of AIDS, or regarding treatment, or official lethargy in this city and state and country?

How many of you really trust that NIH is capable of coordinating research

3 7,3 8 6

and still counting...

around a crisis of this scope?

How many of you even know what the NIH is, or how important it is in your life, and that your very own life is in its hands? You didn't know that did you? That your very own life is in the hands of an agency you don't know anything about.

How many of you believe there is sufficient education to contain what is happening?

How many of you have children? How many of you have spoken to a school board about sex education?

How many of you have had sex with more than one person in the last 10 years?

How many of you have protested actively against mandatory testing?

How many of you are willing to face up to the fact that the FDA is fucked up, the NIH is fucked up, the CDC is very fucked up—and that entering the seventh year of what is now a pandemic the boys and girls running the show at these organizations have been unable to make whatever system they're operating work?

How long are you prepared to wait for these systems to work?

How long are you prepared to wait before our own AIDS organizations provide us with adequate information on available treatments?

How many hours and days are you prepared to spend on the phone attempting, in vain, to find out what is going on where and how's it doing and why can't my dying friends get it immediately?

How many of you believe you have no responsibility to take action on any of these matters?

How many of you need to die or become infected before you feel you can take action on why every single branch of government in charge of AIDS, both local and federal, is dragging its ass?

What's the number at which you can decide to stop just sitting quietly like

You do not have to have AIDS to acquire a system deficient and immune.

the good little boys and girls we were all brought up to be—and start taking rude, noisy, offensive political action?

It always amazes me when I tell people they have power, and they answer me,

"Power? Me? What power?" How can you be so conservative, dumb, and blind? You know what is going on better than anybody; and yet you are silent, you constantly, consistently, and continuously sit on your collective asses and refuse to use your power.

Your voice is your power! Your collective voices! Your group power! Your political power! Your names all strung together on one long list is your power! Your bank accounts are your power, if you weren't all so devastatingly stingy when it comes to funding anything gayer than a Halloween costume. Your bodies are your power, your LIVING bodies all strung together in one long line that reaches across this country and could reach to the moon if we only let it.

You know that this country is not responding on a national political level or a local political level, and yet you sit by along with everyone else and watch our men being picked off one by one by one by one.

No one is in charge of this pandemic, either in this city or this state or this country! It is as simple as that. And certainly no one who is compassionate and

not being tested and were not legally available to us, I got in my car and drove down to Washington. I wanted to find out what was going on. Like most people, I have no notion of how the system works down there, who reports to whom, which agency is supposed to do what. What I found out sent me into as profound a depression as I have been in since this epidemic started.

My first meeting was at the White House, with the President's Domestic Policy Advisor Gary Bauer, who advises Ronald Reagan on AIDS. I asked him if ignoring AIDS was intentional. He answered me that he had not seen enough evidence that the Black Plague was going on yet. He was particularly interested to hear from me that the current evidence indicates that the gay male population of the major cities is on its way to becoming totally exposed to the virus. He asked me if I thought female-to-male transmission was as potent as male-to-male. I said the statistics were about the same. He said his advisors told him otherwise. I asked him if gay people who were AIDS experts could be on the President's Commission, and he told me NO. I asked him why the President had refused

Your bank accounts are your power, if you weren't all so devastatingly stingy when it comes to funding anything gayer than a Halloween costume.

to put anyone in charge—to appoint an AIDS czar? He told me the President was the AIDS czar. I asked him why the President had not only not read Surgeon General Koop's AIDS Report, or the National Academy of Sciences AIDS Report—both of which were then over six months old and both of which beg for immediate, all-out action. And why he hadn't even met with Koop personally, his own Surgeon General, and he answered me that the chain of command dictates that, in matters of health, the President talks only to his Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Otis R. Bowen. It turns out that Dr. Koop has absolutely no power; his position is simply that of figurehead, that they do not like what he is saying, and I think that if you listen to what he is beginning to say now, Dr. Koop is being pulled back into line.

Dr. Otis R. Bowen would not see me. He is Reagan's *third* Secretary of Health and Human Services and he is supposed to be in charge of AIDS. Until he appeared as the closing speaker at the Third International AIDS Conference, where I am happy to say he was roundly booed—were any of you there to boo him?—he had not been heard to say anything substantial at all about AIDS. The Secretary of the main department of your government in charge of AIDS—the one single man who can report to the President on the state of this nation's health—had yet to be heard saying anything about AIDS—at the beginning of the seventh year of this pandemic.

I discovered that Dr. Bowen had passed the AIDS buck over to his Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Robert Windom. Dr. Windom has been in his job just about a year. He's never worked in government before. He was a private physician in Sarasota, Florida, and he got his wonderful opportunity to work so close to his idol, Ronald Reagan, by contributing \$55,000 to Reagan's campaign fund. He is exceptionally ill-informed about AIDS. On a recent NBC Radio coast-to-coast call-in show, he answered two of his questions incorrectly. My favorite description of Dr. Windom comes from a top legislative Congressional aid: "If his IQ were any lower, you'd have to water him."

You laugh—and Dr. Windom is in charge of your life! An uncaring dumb stooge who knows next to nothing about any of the drugs or treatments or research is in charge of your life and you are laughing! Over half the men reading this article could be dead in less than five years and you are laughing at this crack about Dr. Windom!

Dr. Windom reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President.

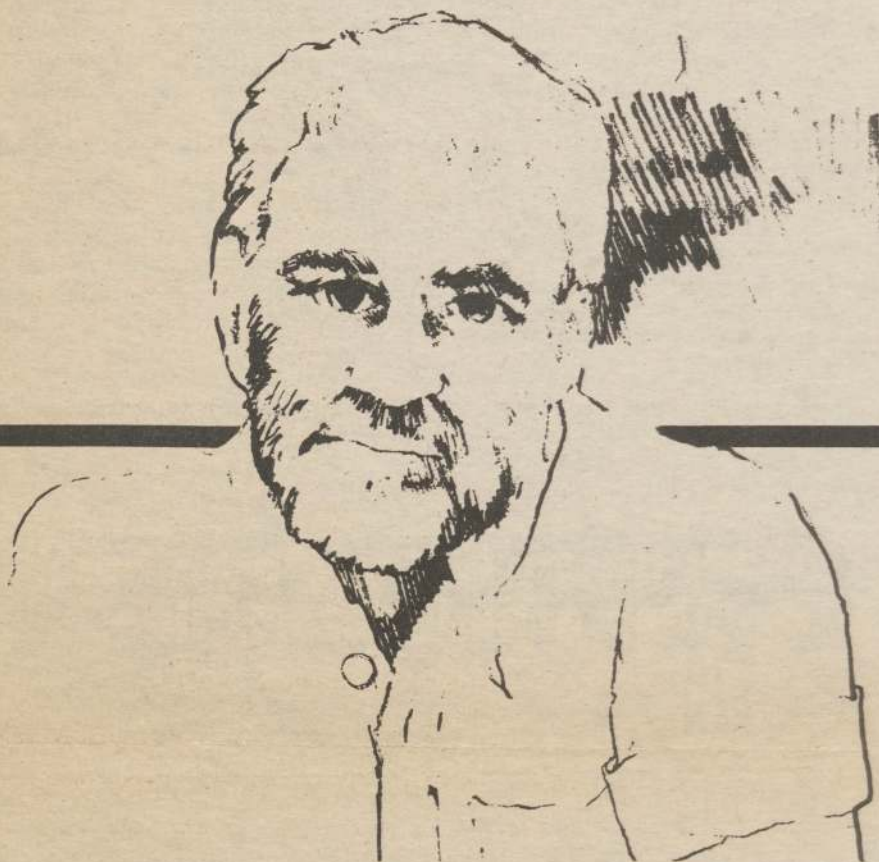
Dr. Windom has passed the AIDS buck to his assistant, Dr. Lowell Harmison. Dr. Harmison is sort of the power behind the power behind the throne. Dr. Harmison does not like gays. Dr. Harmison has been described to me by several Congressional contacts as "evil." "You cannot say enough bad things about Lowell Harmison," I was told by more than one. He is so frightened of gay people that he was terrified we would intentionally give blood in order to pollute the nation's blood supply—on purpose.

Dr. Harmison reports to Dr. Windom who reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President.

These are the four top men in charge of AIDS in the United States Government, the government of all the American people. Your government. God (if there is one) help us—because these four Satans won't.

I am here to tell you that I know more about AIDS than any of these four inhumane men, and that any one of you here who has AIDS or who tends to someone with AIDS, or who reads all the newspapers and watches TV, knows more about AIDS than any of these four monsters. And they are the four fuckers who are in charge of AIDS for your government—the bureaucrats who have the ultimate control over your life.

Next I went to the National Institutes of Health. The National Institutes of Health



understanding and knowledgeable and efficient is even anywhere near the top of those who are in charge. Almost every person connected with running the AIDS show everywhere is second-rate. I have never come across a bigger assortment of the second-rate in my life. And you have silently and trustingly put your

How many of you are willing to face up to the fact that the FDA is fucked up, the NIH is fucked up, the CDC is very fucked up...

lives in their hands. You—who are first rate—are silent. And we are going to die for that silence.

You know—it's not even a question of government funding any more. For six long years we fought so hard to get the money. Finally Congress has appropriated masses of money. *Can you believe me when I tell you that it is not being spent?* Two years ago 19 official AIDS treatment centers, called ATEUs for AIDS treatment evaluation units, were set up by the NIH—and they still aren't being utilized beyond a fraction of their humane possibilities and intentions. One year ago the NIH was given \$47 million just for testing new AIDS drugs—and *they aren't spending it!* Why didn't we know that? Where have we been for these long two years? Why didn't we know that this precious, precious time—during which how many dear dear friends of ours died—was being thrown out in the garbage because we didn't get on the phone and inquire politely: "Please, sirs, can you tell me what you're doing with all that nice money Congress gave you last May?" How could we have been so lazy and irresponsible—and *trusting?* We, of all people in this world, should know better, and know how not to trust. Where were our gay leaders? Where were all our AIDS organizations? Where were our people in Washington? Where was I? For I blame myself more than I blame anyone else. God fucking damn it, I trusted too!

When I found out about three months ago that \$47 million was actually lying around not being used when I knew personally that at least a dozen drugs and treatments just as promising as AZT and in many cases much less toxic were

receives \$6.2 billion each and every year to look after the health of the American people. "To improve the health of the American people" is how the U.S. Government manual describes the NIH's mission. How many of you can tell me the name of the head of NIH?

You don't know the name of the man who is given \$6.2 billion each and every year to help make you better if you have AIDS? You should be ashamed of yourselves.

His name is Dr. James Wyngaarden, and he has never been heard to publicly speak out about AIDS either. \$6.2 billion he is given every year and not only doesn't he speak out about AIDS, but you don't even know his name!

Dr. Wyngaarden reports to Dr. Windom who reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President.

The NIH is like a college campus. It looks like Amherst or like something from

We, of all people in this world, should know better, and know how not to trust.

an old MGM musical. It's really made up of 12 institutes, which are sort of like dorms, or fraternities, all part of the whole. The grounds are manicured and you can't see any shit on the ground. Seven years ago, when AIDS was first noticed, and you would have thought NIH would jump on it fast, this is what happened. You would have thought that because there was a cancer involved, called Kaposi's sarcoma, it should have gone to the institute in charge of cancer, the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health. The National Cancer Institute is the richest fraternity at NIH. In 1981, when AIDS first showed up and should have gone into this rich fraternity, the head of this fraternity didn't want it. He had one billion dollars of research money "to improve the health of the American people," and the head of NCI didn't want it. Now how many of you can tell me the name of the head of NCI, then and now?

The man who is in charge of the most important cancer research institute in the entire world—and you don't know his name? You should be ashamed of yourselves.

His name is Dr. Vincent T. Devita and I have it on good authority that he is gay. In 1981, he didn't want AIDS, he didn't like the smell of it, and he didn't want to spend any of his institute's \$1 billion a year on it, so he too passed the buck.

Dr. Devita reports to Dr. Wyngaarden who reports to Dr. Windom who reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President.

Dr. Devita passed the buck to a poor relation, a much smaller institute named the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases of the National Institutes of Health, which had a budget one-fourth of his and which was not nearly so popular a fraternity to rush and was then run by a man named Dr. Richard Krause, who didn't want AIDS either. Dr. Richard Krause is also a gay man. He subsequently resigned as head of NIAID, and he was replaced by—now I am sure you can tell me the name of the man now the director of NIAID, the man who reports to Dr. Wyngaarden who reports to Dr. Windom who reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President—the single most important name in AIDS today, the name of the man who has probably more effect on your future than anybody else in the world.

How many of you know this man's name?

His name is Dr. Anthony Fauci. He's real cute. He's an Italian from Brooklyn, short, slim, compact, he wears aviator glasses, a natty dresser, a very energetic and dynamic man. After a recent meeting a bunch of us from New York had with him, during which absolutely nothing was accomplished, he asked me what we thought of the meeting. I told him: "everyone thought you were real cute." And he blushed to his roots.

You are smiling and this is the man who has more effect on your future and he is not spending those \$47 million—which were given to him specifically to test AIDS drugs—and you are smiling!

Everybody likes Dr. Fauci and everybody thinks Dr. Fauci is real cute, including me, and every scientific person I spoke to whispers off to the side, "yes, he's real cute, but he's in way over his head." Dr. Fauci is an ambitious bureaucrat who is the recipient of all the buck-passing and dumping-on from all of the above. He staggers, without complaint, under his heavy load. No loud-mouth Dr. Koop

Dr. Fauci has had this \$47 million for a year, and worse—the beds in his AIDS wards are empty!

he.

Dr. Fauci, with his devoted staff of several dozen—that's right, folks, no more than a couple dozen doctors and scientists are fighting against AIDS at NIAID, I guess \$47 million doesn't buy what it used to buy—is chief administrator of the 19 AIDS designated treatment units around the country, and of all AIDS research and testing for the entire country and no major decision can be made

without him. He works 18 hour days, goes into the wards after office hours to visit patients, his wife is an AIDS nurse in his hospital—yes, I am sorry to say he is married, although his wife did look like a lesbian so perhaps . . . he must summon committees, preside over meetings, supervise the selection of drugs to test, monitor their results, deal with pharmaceutical companies, keep up on all the latest information (a new drug application can run to 100,000 pages of evidence), attend conferences all over the world, and put up with complaints from absolutely everyone.

Dr. Fauci, of all the names in this article, is certainly not the enemy; because he is not, and because I think he does care, I am even more angry at him for what he is not doing—no matter what his excuses, and he has many.

Instead of screaming and yelling for help as loud as he can, he tries to make do, to make nice, to negotiate quietly, to assuage. An ambitious bureaucrat doesn't make waves. Yes, Dr. Fauci reports to Dr. Wyngaarden who reports to Dr. Windom who reports to Dr. Bowen who reports to the President.

Dr. Fauci has had this \$47 million for a year, and worse—the beds in his AIDS wards are empty! A whole floor in America's state-of-the-art hospital, \$47 million given him to test new treatments, and his beds are empty, just as the majority of places on the treatment protocols at those 19 ATEUs around the country are empty.

What the fuck is going on here? Are they actually afraid they might learn something that might save us?

Research at NIH? I have not space to go into the gory details. Let me just say that the research rivalries in and among all the institutes at NIH could make a TV series to rival "Dynasty" and "Falcon Crest" in competitiveness, hostility, selfishness, and greed. (Why doesn't the press write about these scandals as they do about all others? Why doesn't the press ever investigate NIH? Is it so holy—like the Vatican?)

Now you know why NIH stand for "Not Interested in Homosexuals."

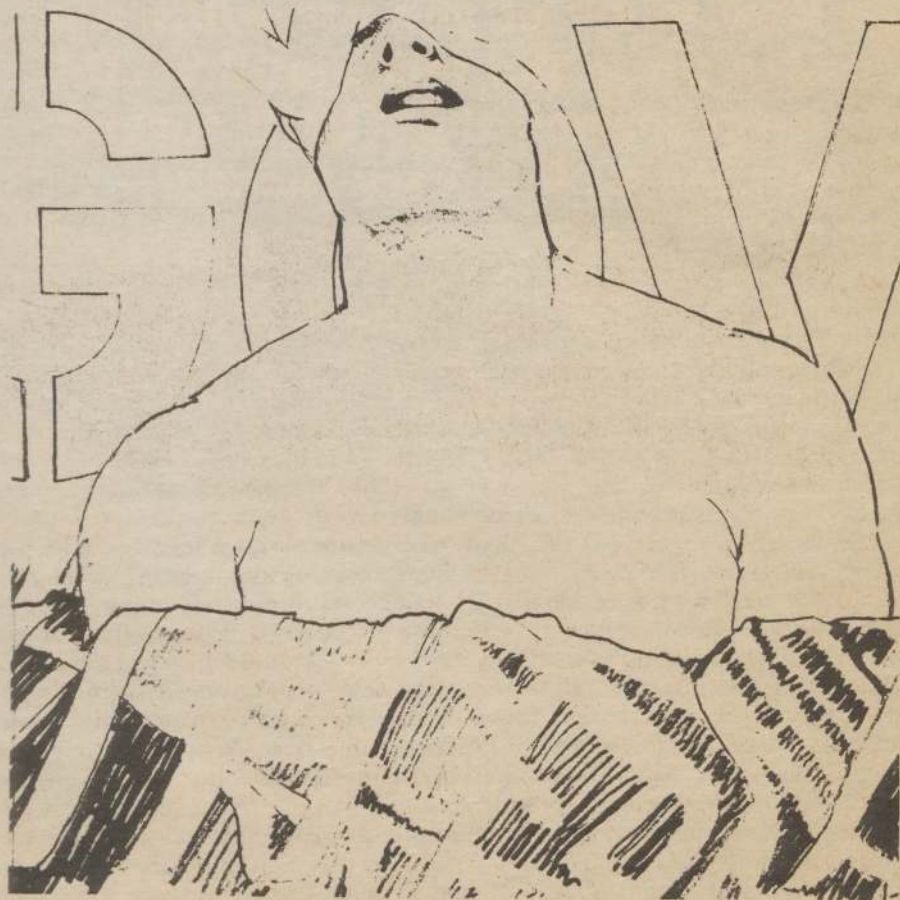
What the fuck is going on here and what the fuck are you doing about it?

If I use gross revolting language—go ahead be offended—I don't know how else to reach you, how to reach everybody. I tried starting an organization: I co-founded GMHC which becomes more timid as it becomes richer day by day.

What the fuck is going on here? Are they actually afraid they might learn something that might save us?

I tried writing a play. I tried writing endless articles in the *Native* and the *New York Times* and *Newsday* and screaming on Donahue and in front of every TV camera put in front of me. I helped start ACT UP, a small bunch of too few very courageous people willing to make rude noises. I don't know what else to do to wake you up!

I will tell you something else to try and wake you up: if AIDS does not spread out widely into the white non-drug using heterosexual population, as it may or may not do, then the white non-drug using population is going to hate us even



more—for scaring them, for costing them a fucking fortune, for our “lifestyle” which they will say caused this. AIDS will stay a disease of blacks and hispanics and gays and it will continue to be ignored, it will be even more ignored.

The straight world is scared now because they’re worried it’s going to happen to them. What if it doesn’t? Think about that for a while. If all this lethargy is going on now, think what will happen then—just as you are coming down with

**And how many dead brothers
have to be piled up in a heap
in front of your faces before
you learn to fight back and
scream and yell and
demand . . .**

it and facing death.

Who is fighting back in any and all of this? Twenty-four million gay men and lesbians in this country and who is fighting back? We have a demonstration in Washington and we have 300 people and we think we’re lucky! We get our pictures in all the magazines and newspapers for one or two days and we feel real proud. 60,000 Catholics march in Albany. 250,000 Jews march in New York against the treatment of Soviet Jews. One million people march for nuclear disarmament.

What does it take to get you off your fucking asses?

“You want to die, Felix? Die!” That’s a line from “The Normal Heart.” In his immense frustration, Ned Weeks yells it at his dying lover. That’s not only how I felt about Felix, but how I feel about all of you.

What does it take to make people hate? I hate Ed Koch because he is the one person in this entire world who could have done something in the beginning and didn’t and it took us two years to even get a meeting with him, (we must always remember that, as Dr. Mathilde Krim tells us, “this is an epidemic that could have been contained”). And he has put yet another powerless wimp in place as his Commissioner of Health; and gay men and women in New York still kiss Koch’s ass, as gay men and women still think Ronald Reagan is peachy wonderful. And gay people in Massachusetts think that Ted Kennedy is wonderful and he is in charge of health issues in the Senate and he has been silent and cowardly about AIDS for six long years. And how many dead brothers have to be piled up in a heap in front of your faces before you learn to fight back and scream and yell and demand and take some responsibility for your own lives?

I am telling you they are killing us, and we are letting them.

Yes, I am screaming like an hysteric. I know that. I look and sound like an asshole. I told you this was going to be my last tirade and I am going to go out screaming so fucking rudely that you will hear this coarse crude voice of mine in your nightmares. You are going to die and you are going to die very very soon unless you get up off your fucking tushies and fight back!

Unless you do—you will forgive me—but you deserve to die.

I never thought I would come to say anything like that. Nobody deserves to die.

I recently spoke at a *Village Voice* AIDS Forum in New York on a panel with Dr. Ron Grossman, who has one of the largest gay practices in New York. “Larry,” he said to me, “our most outrageous early pronouncements are short of the mark. And so have been our efforts. We are so behind.”

AIDS is our holocaust. Tens of thousands of our precious men are dying. AIDS is our holocaust and Reagan is our Hitler. New York City is our Auschwitz.

Holocaust is another word for genocide.

“Genocide” is a word I hear myself and others using more and more frequently. You don’t hear it as much as you hear words like “mandatory testing” or “no

**You are going to die and you
are going to die very very soon
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ing tushies and fight back!**

sex education in the schools” or “no condom ads on TV.”

Why doesn’t everybody realize that all the screaming and yelling going on about “education” and “mandatory testing” is one whale of a red herring?

Why doesn’t everyone realize that while all the hatred and fury from the right wing, from the fundamentalists, ecumenicals, Mormons, Southern Baptists, born-again, Charismatics, orthodox Jews, Phyllis Schlafly, Paul Cameron, Governor Deukmejian, Rep. Dannemeyer, Jesse Helms, Jerry Falwell—and all their equally as vocal supporters goes on; that while they are screaming and yelling about the naughtiness of condoms and sex education and homosexuality, the killing culprit virus continues to spread and spread and spread and kill and kill and kill. While Rome burns, the Falwells fiddle fanning their fundamentalists into fury against the faggots—and the junkies and the niggers and the spics and the whores and . . .

And they know it!

It is perfectly clear to me—no matter what Ronald Reagan and his henchmen say—that no substantial battle for a cure will be mounted while he is in office and that we must endure, at the least, another eighteen months of untended intended death.

Very consciously they know that the more noise they can make, the more stalling tactics they can put into action, with the aid of his staff and his Cabinet and his Vice-President and his Attorney General and his Justice Department and his Supreme Court and his Secretary of Education and his various Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of Health and Human Services and his director of the National Institutes of Health and his Centers for Disease Control—the more gays and Blacks and Hispanics will die.

They know this. I believe it is as conscious an act as this.

And we are allowing it!

We have fallen into their trap!

Our leaders—such as they are—their energies are consumed fighting these battles against mandatory testing and for better education; and no one is fighting the NIH for drugs and increased protocol testing and faster research. I am telling you that there are drugs and treatments out there that can prolong the quality of our lives and you are not getting them. No one is fighting for them; and these drugs and treatments are caught up in so much red tape that they are strangled in the pipeline and the Reagan administration knows this, knows all this, and does nothing about untangling the red tape and half the men reading this can die because of it.

Yes, by our own passivity we are actively colluding and participating in our

**AIDS is our holocaust and
Reagan is our Hitler. New York
City is our Auschwitz.**

own genocide.

We are allowing ourselves to be knocked off one by one. Half the men reading this could be dead in five years.

Our gay organizations are weak and *still* don’t work with each other and our AIDS organizations have all been co-opted by the very systems they were formed to make accountable and you all sit by and allow it to happen when it’s your lives that are going down the tubes.

Politicians understand only one thing: PRESSURE. You don’t apply it—you don’t get anything. Simple as that.

And it must be applied day by week by month by year. You simply can’t let up for one single second. Or you don’t get anything. Which is what is happening to us.

For six years I have been trying to get the gay world angry enough to exert this pressure. I have failed and I am ashamed of my failure. I blame myself:

**Politicians understand only one
thing: PRESSURE. You don’t
apply it—you don’t get
anything.**

somehow I wasn’t convincing enough or clever enough or cute enough to break through your denial or self-pity or death wish or self-destruction or whatever the fuck is going on. I’m very tired of trying to make you hear me.

I’m shutting up and going away. The vast majority of the gay world will not listen to what is so simple and plain. That around this country there are so few voices as strident as mine is our tragedy. That across this country there is not one single gay leader who has any national recognition like Gloria Steinem or Cardinal O’Connor or Jerry Falwell or Jesse Jackson is also our tragedy. Why is that? Why does every gay spokesperson finally just collapse under the apathy of trying to make you listen—and failing, failing utterly.

Don’t you ask yourselves quite often the Big Question: Why am I still alive? Untouched? At some point I did something the others did. How have I escaped? Don’t you think that makes you obligated to repay God or fate or whomever or whatever, if only you conscience, for this miraculous fact: I am still alive. I must put back something into this world for my own life, which is worth a tremendous amount. By not putting back you are saying that your lives are worth shit, and that we deserve to die, and that the deaths of all our friends and lovers have amounted to nothing.

I can’t believe in your heart of hearts you feel this way.
I can’t believe you want to die.

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HEALTHFRONT

Stoicism Marks Third AIDS Conference

by Garland Richard Kyle

Despite the colossal headlines, the booing of President Reagan at the American Federation of AIDS Research (AmFAR) dinner as he announced mandatory HIV testing for immigrants and prisoners, and the arrest of 64 gay activists demanding increased funding for AIDS, many Los Angeles-based AIDS service providers found this year's Third International AIDS Conference disappointing.

Held in Washington, DC, and drawing more than 7,000 participants, the conference was touted as being the largest

Lein believed that one panel, presented by Persons With AIDS provided conference participants with the "human dimensions of the disease". . .

conference ever held on AIDS. Thousands of scientists, physicians, government officials, public health professionals and journalists from throughout the world gathered anxiously for some hopeful news about one of the world's most frightening epidemics. Although literally hundreds of presentations were made at the five-day event, most of the scientific research data provided inconclusive evidence in the fight against AIDS. Instead, the conference seemed to provide an opportunity for scientific grandstanding, for researchers to get their names in the paper and for drug companies to hock their wares.

"It was like a year in review," remarked Richard Mahon, a nurse clinician with the Philip Mandelker AIDS Prevention Clinic. "A lot of scientists were advocating their approaches and their research," noted Mahon of the highly competitive nature of this year's event. Mahon, a five-year veteran in the field of AIDS care, felt the conference lacked practical information for service providers.

"I was disappointed that there wasn't enough psycho-social issues addressed—especially relating to HIV testing. There was nothing at the conference on direct services or nursing care; it was purely scientific and medically oriented," he explained.

Russ Toth, director of the Los Angeles-based Computerized Information Network (CAIN) felt the conference fell short of its goals as a truly international forum.

"For an international conference, I was very disappointed. There was no translation available except for the hearing impaired," remarked Toth. "There wasn't a large enough scope of scientific papers outside of the United States and Europe—nothing from South America or Asia. The conference just didn't have an international flair," insisted Toth.

Toth, who coordinates an international data base which provides AIDS information, thought that "there was little communication between groups of people even among physicians. It was far too large."

In terms of the conference's content, Toth, like Mahon, felt that the information available primarily "confirmed what has already been written or published."

While newspapers from throughout the world reported daily on the conference proceedings and various scientific presentations, most of the news failed to reveal any major breakthroughs. Bob Lein, director of Health Education for the Edmund D. Edelman Health Center, described the information provided at the conference as "nothing earth shattering." He said, "Those of us who are responsible for transmitting (AIDS) information have been providing information that is basically state-of-the-art."

Lein did, however, feel that there was some interesting information coming out of the conference including genetic issues among hemophiliacs, certain co-factors in the transmission and development of AIDS including diseases such as herpes and syphilis and several panels addressing the issue of ethics. He believed that one panel, presented by Persons With AIDS provided conference participants with the "human dimensions of the disease" which was lacking in much of the conference program.

"It (the conference) was a bizarre combination of politics and science. It did a better job bringing up political issues than scientific findings," remarked Lein.

Although the scientific conference attempted to avoid politics, Reagan's and Vice President Bush's comments, the arrests of gay activists and the presence of Paul Cameron, a right-wing anti-gay crusader at the conference booth, politicized an otherwise stoic event. Cameron, whose booth donned a sign reading "The Way to Stop AIDS is to Stop Gay Travel" outraged many AIDS service providers and gay participants, prompting numerous complaints to conference organizers about the presence of the conservative Cameron and his followers. In addition, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and the Reagan administration's position on mandatory testing seemed to differ greatly. Despite both Reagan's and Bush's remarks, Koop remained opposed to such a drastic measure which he felt was both unworkable and unproductive.

"What was inspiring was seeing Europe's health education programs," noted Toth. "In Denmark and Germany they are much more direct in their approach to sex," stated Mahon. Both insisted that Europe's approach to sex education and condoms was far more effective in reaching people than their counterpart in the United States.

While more AIDS service providers and members of the gay community who attended the Third International AIDS Conference came away from the proceedings disappointed and feeling alienated from this