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Hi-Def Dish: "30 Years From Here" is a gem, telling AIDS history from viewpoint of survivors | VIDEO

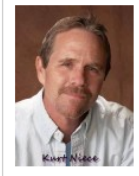
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December 28th, 2011

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Perspective's a hard-edged, flinty reward. It's the pearl of experience. It's the faceted gem of insight, wisdom and hard-gained knowledge. Like diamonds, perspective comes when heat, pressure and time are applied to the ordinary.

In the end, a jewel called perspective is the prize for those who survived.

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here! TV has produced an amazingly well-told story. "30 Years From Here" is the real life accounts from the war on AIDS as told by the veterans.

"About a year ago we were planning our production schedule in terms and series, specials and web stuff," director Josh Rosenzweig said from his office in New York. "Someone reminded me that 2011 was the 30th anniversary, marking the beginning when the first cases of this gay, mysterious cancer was diagnosed. This was a big milestone in terms of the number of years, and it looked like within the year 2011, things might accelerate in the progress we were making medically. I felt that as one of the largest if not the largest LGBT media company, we had a responsibility to do something to acknowledge this period of time."

Anyone younger than the age of 40 may be understandably weary of the tale. They've grown up with AIDS. Those of us older than 40 have a much different perspective, though. We remember the "before" times and that first article in *77The New York Times*, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals."

It's difficult, if not impossible, to accurately convey the panic and the wild speculation of those days. Everything from poppers to secret government plots was suspect.

"I have a house on Fire Island," Rosenzweig explained, "so I meet a lot of these young kids who are 23, 24, 25 years old and have no clue about any of this. This was something we kept in mind. We didn't want '30 Years From Here' to be just an educational piece. This was my story. I lived in fear and I lived in that sadness, and I don't think these young people understand the intensity of that."

True. Unless you were there, it's nearly impossible to grasp the zeitgeist of those times. Many younger folk don't realize that there were four long years of no blood tests and no way to detect infection. All we could do then was wait and pray for no night sweats or swollen lymph nodes or unexplained rashes.

"One of the things that came up in a conversation about half way through the production was what we all felt the first time we saw the AIDS quilt laid out, whether it was in Long Beach or on the mall in Washington, D.C. The kids today don't know that moment of walking and seeing these endless names laid out in front of them. They didn't see the people who would come and cover this piece of fabric with tears."

When the over-40 crowd recalls those times, we do so with a combination of survivor's guilt, inconsolable grief and anger that so much bad happened to so many good people. It's tempting to forget, to put it all out of mind. But, that can't be. We must never forget.

People have a nasty habit of re-writing history. It's not that difficult to find an individual who believes the holocaust is a myth. As difficult and heart wrenching as it may be, it's imperative that the LGBT community never forgets, and that we must face the challenge of passing on the story.

Thankfully, Rosenzweig and producer Eric Feldman did the heavy lifting. They, and an astounding production crew, created a clear window onto a very dark time in LGBT history, and they've done so without manipulation or excessive drama. They've simply and beautifully, told a story.

There's nothing that's easy about "30 Years From Here." The subject is too fresh for some, and irrelevant, maudlin history to others.

But "30 Years From Here" is beautiful. It is clear, and it is articulate. It's a wonderfully written and directed, but in the end it's a piece about hope. Suddenly, phrases like the strength of the human spirit don't seem cliché. This is a work about healing. This is a piece about life.

"30 Years From Here" is good medicine.

We are about to enter the fourth decade of HIV. There's an estimated 35 million active cases of HIV worldwide. These chilling statistics have little to do with the warm, loving, life-filled human beings that those statistics reflect. Rosenzweig and Feldman remind us of what can't be dismissed. They've created a diamond.

Be certain to see, and to share this film.

The details

"30 Years From Here" will air repeatedly throughout the month of December on the here! Network. The special will be available online as well.

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