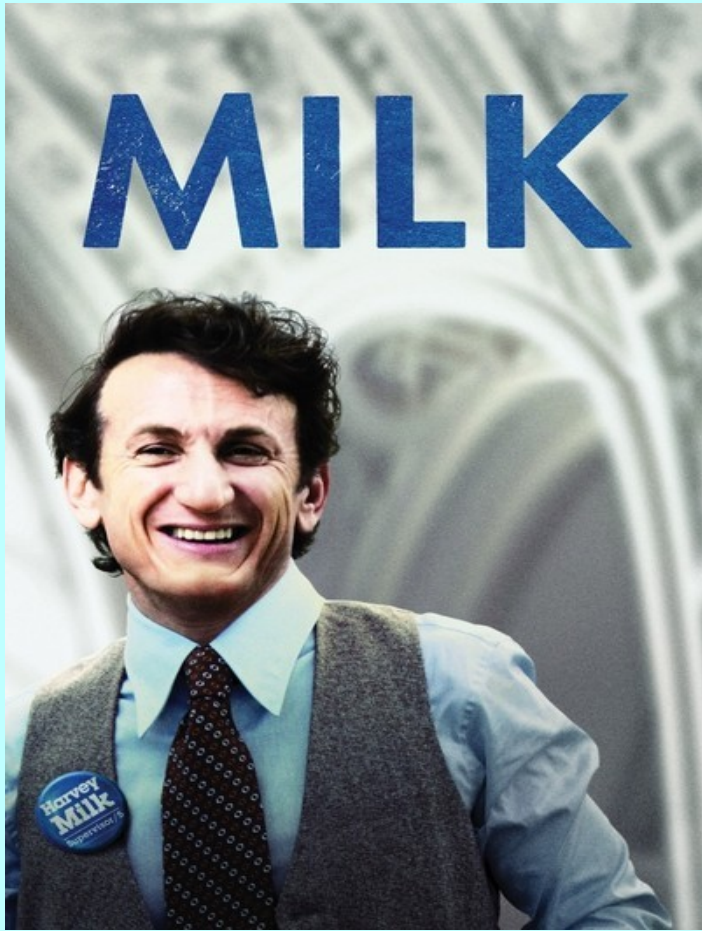


MILK



MILK

Gus Van Sant, 2008, 128 minutes

SYNOPSIS / OVERVIEW

This is a feature film about Harvey Milk, a white gay man who was the first openly gay person to be elected to public office in California and the US. Harvey Milk's political career centered on making government responsive to individuals, gay liberation, and the importance of neighborhoods to the city. He became politically active in 1970, ran for office three times, and was elected to the San Francisco City Supervisors in 1977; he was murdered in 1978 by another city supervisor, Dan White.



KEY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Milk's politics spoke of the importance of LGBTQ people representing all of ourselves and our communities. Do you think that is a strong strategy? Why or why not? If so, why are we stronger when we gather our entire communities?
2. Milk believed that hope and liberation of the most oppressed people meant liberation for everyone. Why is this key? Where do you see hope for oppressed communities right now? For LGBT communities, specifically?
3. Milk believed everyone should come out their family in order to build an LGBT liberation movement. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Historian John D'Emilio said, "The legacy that I think he [Milk] would want to be remembered for is the imperative to live one's life at all times with integrity". What does living with integrity mean to you?

KEY QUOTES TO USE

“We don’t want sympathetic liberals, we want gays to represent gays ... I represent the gay street people—the 14-year-old runaway from San Antonio. We have to make up for hundreds of years of persecution. We have to give hope to that poor runaway kid ... They go to the bars because churches are hostile. They need hope!”

“And the young gay people... The only thing they have to look forward to is hope. And you have to give them hope. Hope for a better world...hope for a better place to come to if the pressures at home are too great...Without hope, not only gays, but the blacks, the seniors, the handicapped, the us’es, the us’es will give up...hope to a nation that has given up, because if a gay person makes it, the doors are open to everyone.”

KEY SCENES

- ◇ When Harvey Milk and his partner are outside of their brand new business and a neighboring business owner comes out and spouts homophobic insults; the next scene is Harvey saying that he needs to start organizing all gay business owners one by one, block by block
- ◇ When another business owner asks Harvey to organize ‘his people’ against the beer company that is trying to get into the local businesses. A great scene to talk about unlikely alliances
- ◇ When Harvey Milk says that all gay people need to come out of the closet and tell their parents, friends, and family that they are gay. He makes his friends pick up the phone and make the call to their parents on the spot.

OPTIONAL: 201 KEY QUESTIONS

1. NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZING Milk was elected city supervisor in 1977 after San Francisco reorganized its election procedures to choose representatives from neighborhoods rather than through city-wide ballots. All along, Milk was committed to organizing neighborhoods and building through relationships. He was able to win by a neighborhood strategy. What can we learn from this today?
2. Milk’s campaigns were often compared to theater because they were brash and outspoken. Milk believed in frank and honest media work, and telling the truth in our stories. Where do you see the most shame play out in LGBT communities right now? How can we transform that shame?
3. Milk believed in being proud and open about many parts of LGBT communities and lives that are generally scary to straight people. For example, he was known for identifying himself and others as ‘queens’, ‘homos’ and ‘fairies.’ He was also known for generally being open to non-monogamy (in his earlier political years) and gender non-conformity. He felt that we should be proud of who we are and tell the truth to win real support from an unsympathetic majority. Do you agree? If you do, how do you think we could learn from these lessons right now in our work for liberation?

APPENDIX: LEGAL RIGHTS CHART

The purpose of this chart is to share out the legal information that we as SONG have so that everyone is in the KNOW and can feel confident about organizing a film screening or series in your town. Over the years, SONG has screened many films including, for example, MILK, through sources like Netflix many times; in our homes, at community events and in many other places. One thing we do know is that no matter the film or setting, SONG members should not use film screenings to do any form of fundraising—meaning, you cannot charge any form of entry fee when advertising the film or make any pitches to fundraise as a part of your screening. That being said—this chart provides a little more specific information about the screening rights to each film—many of which we’ve purchased through SONG. For any further questions feel free to contact SONG at takeaction@southernersonnewground.org

FILM	LEGAL RIGHTS	SUGGESTIONS FROM SONG
How To Survive A Plague	http://surviveaplague.com/watch http://www.rocoeducation-al.com/how_to_survive_a_plague	<p>i. SONG has purchased the legal rights to screen How to Survive A Plague! We purchased a public performance DVD which includes two versions of the film on one DVD (feature-length version as well as a one-hour version) as well as unlimited public performance rights, meaning that SONG can screen the film an unlimited number of times at any SINGLE location.</p> <p>ii. Contact SONG to get a copy a copy of the document that says we have the right to screen the film</p>
Tongues Untied	http://newsreel.org/video/TONGUES-UNTIED http://newsreel.org/nav/policypopup.asp?id=36 http://newsreel.org/nav/policypopup.asp?id=34	<p>i. SONG has purchased the legal rights to screen Tongues Untied! We are entitled to the screening rights for 3 years (til 2018) and you can reach out to us when you are ready to screen.</p> <p>ii. Contact SONG to get a copy a copy of the document that says we have the right to screen the film.</p>
MILK	http://library.movlic.com/	<p>i. You can find/order MILK from Netflix.</p> <p>ii. Reach out to a local organization, community center, public library or university to see if they have a copy of the film or if they would be willing to purchase the legal rights to the film, then make a plan accordingly.</p>
<i>Call Me Kuchu</i>	http://callmekuchu.com/hostascreening/	<p>i. SONG has purchased the screening rights to Call Me Kuchu and we now have multiple copies available in our library. Reach out to us about getting a copy of the screening rights.</p>
<i>Pay It No Mind</i>	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo0nYv9QIj4	<p>i. Check back with SONG for more updates; we may or may not have purchased the legal rights to screen this film organizationally This film is on available on YouTube and for this reason mostly likely open for public screening with license. Check back again with SONG before formally screening.</p>

IGNITING THE KINDRED



A SOUTHERN LGBTQ FILM SERIES

TOOLKIT

Acknowledgments

We want to give a huge thanks and shout out to all of the SONG members who helped develop the content of this toolkit, select the films, develop discussion guides, and format and design the toolkit. This is truly a collective, regional love offering from our political family.

Questions?

Want to talk this out? Have suggestions or ideas? Want to tell us how it went?

Contact us at takeaction@southernersonnewground.org

www.southernersonnewground.org

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