

Pay It No Mind Marsha P. Johnson



© Photo by Johnny Romanek

Marsha P. Johnson was a revolutionary trans activist, Stonewall instigator, Andy Warhol model, drag queen, prostitute, and Saint, as well as a downtown New York City fixture.

From the 1960's through her too-soon demise in 1992, Johnson persevered through a life embodied by her middle initial P, which stood for "Pay It No Mind."

A documentary conceived by
Richard Morrison
and
directed by
Michael Kasino

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Larry Mitchell PRESENTS

Pay It No Mind Marsha P. Johnson

Pay It No Mind: Marsha P. Johnson



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Featuring Marsha P. Johnson, Michael Musto, Taylor Mead, Agosto Machado, Randolph Wicker, Jimmy Camicia, Tommy Lanigan-Schmidt, Bob Kohler, Danny Garvin, Martin Boyce, and David Carter.

Featuring the music of Antony and the Johnsons

Pay It No Mind: The Life & Times of Marsha P. Johnson

Michael Kasino, 2012, 55 minutes

WHERE IT CAN BE FOUND: Youtube <https://youtu.be/rjN9W2KstqE>

SYNOPSIS / OVERVIEW

This is a feature-length documentary on trans-activist, Marsha “Pay It No Mind” Johnson. The film dives into the dynamic Marsha and her life as an Andy Warhol model, a drag queen, sex worker, activist and organizer, and participant of the Stonewall Riot. Learn more about Marsha’s life and work and the LGBTQ community that surrounded her in New York from the ‘60s through the ‘90s.

KEY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Marsha was active in the 1969 Stonewall Riots and the Gay Liberation Front that helped spark the LGBTQ Liberation Movement, yet many young LGBTQ people have never heard of her or these events. Does this matter for LGBTQ people today? Why or why not?
2. What role did drag play in Marsha’s life and in the LGBTQ community?
3. How did poverty impact Marsha’s life and her activism?
4. What role did HIV and AIDS play to Marsha and her community?

KEY QUOTES TO USE

“I never have done drag seriously, I always just do drag...because I didn’t have the money to do serious drag...I always have to get my dresses donated...that’s not too often because once they see you and see how good you look...they go home and try to come out looking twice as good.”–Marsha P. Johnson (10:10)

“She put her life on the line. People think, oh, the gay community just happened this way. It didn’t. There were people like Marsha, literally in the street, not just celebrating but fighting for rights.” -Michael Musto (39:00)

“She’s someone who gay kids today know nothing about...it’s a shame really because she is one of the reasons they are sitting in a liberated glory today.” -Michael Lynch, Hot Peaches (04:00)

“Homophobia in the gay community. She used to say some of the queens treated dead dogs better than her.” -James Gallagher (14:20)

“They tried to ban transvestites in the [GAY PRIDE] parade in like 1978.” –Randolfe Wicker (37:45)

KEY SCENES TO USE

- ◇ History, role, and significance of the Stonewall Riots and Marsha's involvement in them. (14:30)
- ◇ The creation of STAR and Marsha's activism (23:52)
- ◇ The criminalization of Marsha as a sex worker and trans person and her interactions with the police (35:20)

OPTIONAL: 201 KEY QUESTIONS

1. There has always been a history of gender-based oppression in the LGBTQ community from transphobia to anti-femmeness to sexism. How does this manifest in LGBTQ communities today personally, politically, and culturally?
2. Referred to as a "patron saint," Marsha's spirituality is often alluded to throughout the film, from her sacrifices at The Pier to King Neptune (41:45) and her acceptance of Jesus to the various churches she attended. What role did spirituality play in Marsha's life? How might this have impacted her mental health and her interactions with the police? Do we see similar things in our community today?

SUPPLEMENTARY TOOLS & RESOURCES

Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries: Survival, Revolt, and Queer Antagonist Struggle
<http://untorellipress.noblogs.org/files/2011/12/STAR.pdf>



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/	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.
<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</p> <p>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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