The Times of Harvey Milk

Coms 133 – Spring 2019

Postscript

Why San Francisco, the Castro District, and gays?

1. Castro was a former blue-collar Catholic district but in the 60’s manufacturing which supplied the jobs moved to Oakland and housing prices fell as working families moved out.
2. Affluent gays began moving into the area because they could get larger houses for less money.
3. San Francisco already had one of the largest gay presences than any city in the United States.
4. After WWII the navy separated them from the service because they were gay and the navel bases that they were “let go” from where in the San Francisco area.
5. As San Francisco became known as a place that many gays now lived and where somewhat excepted, many more gays from all over the United States moved to the city.
6. The Briggs Initiative, Prop. 6.
7. 1978
8. All gay teachers could lose their job from any California public school.
9. The aftermath of Dan White’s trial:
10. District by district elections were eliminated for 10 years before they were voted back in.
11. Dan White served 5 years in prison.
12. Dan’s wife divorced him.
13. He killed himself a year after being released from prison.
14. A United States Navy ship has been named after him.
15. Dan White’s “Twinkie Defense:”
16. Somewhat of a myth as Twinkies themselves were never mentioned in the trial; Ho-Hos and Ding-Dongs, but no Twinkies.
17. The main point made was that White had “Diminished Capacity” and acted in “the heat of passion which fogs judgment.”
18. Diminished capacity is a legal defense used in some criminal cases to argue that the defendant was less mentally capable than a normal person of having the required mental state for the offense. The wrongful intent required for a criminal conviction is called mens rea (Latin for “guilty mind”). Diminished capacity does not amount to insanity, but is rather a condition that affects a defendant's ability to process information or to reason. It is also referred to as diminished mental capacity and partial responsibility.
19. Laws vary by state, but any or all mental disorders may satisfy the requirements of a diminished capacity defense. For example, the "Twinkie" defense used for Dan White’s trial; the defendant claimed that a reaction to a high of intake of sugar affected his ability to reason.