In contrast to the stereotypical depictions frequently seen in episodic television programming over the past five decades, historically, many made-for-TV movies have reflected a more realistic approach to representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities and issues. As early as 1972, ABC's That Certain Summer, explored the relationship between a divorced gay man and his son to warm critical reception and a subsequent Golden Globe award for "Best Movie Made for TV." Similarly, ABC's A Question of Love (1978) marked an early portrayal of a lesbian mother, her loving relationship with her domestic partner and their joint effort to retain custody of their children in a climate of homophobia. An Early Frost, broadcast on NBC in 1985, garnered wide acclaim and numerous awards as one of the first network programs to dramatically and sensitively examine the devastating impact of the AIDS crisis on a gay individual and his family.

Unencumbered by pressures to accommodate advertisers, productions originating from the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and cable networks have consistently presented a wider range of earnest depictions of LGBT lifestyles than have been previously shown on television. HBO's More Than Friends: The Coming Out of Heidi Leiter (1994) featured an early small screen same-sex kiss in its examination of a teenager's realization of her lesbian sexual orientation. Showtime's drama, Soldier's Girl (2003) offered the true story of hate crime victim Barry Winchell, a 21-year-old private first class who falls in love with a transgendered nightclub performer.

The UCLA Film & Television Archive has a number of titles related to Made-For-TV movies featuring LGBT issues and subject matter. For more information, or to arrange research viewing, please contact the Archive Research and Study Center (ARSC) at 310-206-5388, or by e-mail: arsc@ucla.edu

-- Please note some titles may require additional lead-time to make available for viewing --

1970s


Sergeant Matlovich vs. the U.S. Air Force (1978-08-21). NBC. Director, Paul Leaf. Writer, John McGreevey. Cast, Brad Dourif, Ellen Holly, Harrison Page. True story of Leonard Matlovich, a U.S. Air Force sergeant who was dismissed from service when it was discovered that he was gay. Study Copy: VA22508 T


1980s

Sidney Shorr: A Girl’s Best Friend (1981-10-05). NBC. Director, Russ Mayberry. Writers, Marilyn Baker, Oliver Hailey. Cast, Tony Randall, David Huffman, Kaleena Kiff. The homosexual main character in this movie, presented as anti-abortion, prudish and celibate was tolerated by conservative organizations like the Coalition for Better Television and the Moral Majority. Study Copy: VA2273 T


1990s

American Playhouse. Andre’s Mother (1990-03-07). PBS. Producers, Deborah Reinisch, Sarah Green. Director, Deborah Reinisch. Writer, Terence McNally. Cast, Mark Zeisler, Cyndia Sieden, Sada Thompson. A journey through grief and acceptance following the death of a young man from AIDS. Named “Outstanding Television Movie” by the National Board of Review. Study Copy: VA11153 T

Doing Time on Maple Drive (1992-03-16). FOX. Director, Ken Olin. Writer, James Duff. Cast, James Sikking, Bibi Besch, William McNamara. A college student returns home to introduce his family to his fiancée, only to reveal he is gay following a suicide attempt. Study Copy: VA22498 T

Hoffman’s biography traces Cohn’s life [as prosecutor and confidant to Senator Joseph McCarthy] via flashbacks as he lies dying from AIDS.” Study Copy: VA11086 T


Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story (1995-02-06). NBC. Executive Producers, Barbara Streisand, Glenn Close, Craig Zadan, Neil Meron. Director, Jeff Bleckner. Writer, Alison Cross. Cast, Glenn Close, Judy Davis, Jan Rubes. At the time of broadcast Colonel Cammermeyer was the highest-ranking person ever expelled from the U.S. military on grounds of homosexuality. Study Copy: VA13047 T

Any Mother’s Son (1997). Lifetime. Director, David Burton Morris. Writer, Bruce Harmon. Cast, Bonnie Bedelia, Hedy Burress, Paul Popowich. Based on a true story about a U.S. Navy seaman who is killed by his shipmates when they discover he is gay. Study Copy: VA18379 T


Archive Study Guide:

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER
TELEVISION: MADE-FOR-TV MOVIES

Turing. Turing was convicted of “acts of gross indecency” by the British courts and committed suicide in 1954. Study Copy: VA20156 T


*Execution of Justice* (1999-11-28). Showtime. Director, Leon Ichaso. Writer, Michael Butler. Cast, Tim Daly, Khalil Kain, Tyne Daly. Based on the play by Emily Mann, this courtroom drama examines the aftermath of the 1978 assassination of San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and City Supervisor Harvey Milk. Study Copy: VA22510 T

**2000s**


*The Truth About Jane* (2000-08-07). Lifetime. Director, Writer, Lee Rose. Cast, Stockard Channing, Ellen Muth, Kelly Rowan. A high school teenager attempts to deal with the discovery that she is a lesbian. Study Copy: VA18653 T

*Holiday Heart* (2000-12-10). Showtime. Director, Robert Townsend. Writer, Cheryl L. West. Cast, Ving Rhames, Alfre Woodard, Jesika Reynolds. A grief-stricken drag queen finds new meaning in life when he takes in a battered drug addict and her child. Inventory Number: T87734
Archive Study Guide:
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER
TELEVISION: MADE-FOR-TV MOVIES


Stranger Inside (2001-06-23). HBO. Director, Cheryl Dunye. Writer, Catherine Crouch, Cheryl Dunye. Cast, Yolonda Ross, Davenia McFadden, Rain Phoenix. Set in a maximum-security prison, this telefilm reveals the intricacies of female bonding beyond the usual stereotypes. Study Copy: DVD5988 T


The list of titles above was compiled with the assistance of the following reference works: THE PRIME TIME CLOSET: A HISTORY OF GAYS AND LESBIANS ON TV (2002) by Stephen Tropiano and Steven Capsuto’s ALTERNATE CHANNELS: THE UNCENSORED STORY OF GAY AND LESBIAN IMAGES ON RADIO AND TELEVISION (2000).

PRINT RESOURCES
(for more information consult the UCLA Libraries Collection)


OUTFEST LEGACY COLLECTION AT UCLA

In addition to the titles listed in this collection profile, the Archive holds the Outfest Legacy Collection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) which includes over 5,000 Outfest Film Festival entries, released studio films, works-in-progress, television programs, public service announcements, commercials, music videos and electronic press kits available for research access.

For additional information related to material in this collection or to arrange onsite viewing at UCLA, please contact the Archive Research and Study Center (ARSC) at 310-206-5388, or via email: arsc@ucla.edu