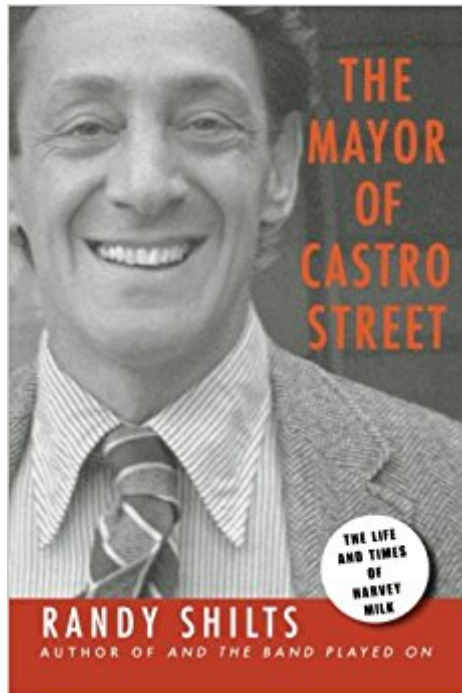




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# The Mayor Of Castro Street: The Life And Times Of Harvey Milk



## Synopsis

The Mayor of Castro Street is Shilts's acclaimed story of Harvey Milk, the man whose personal life, public career, and tragic assassination mirrored the dramatic and unprecedented emergence of the gay community in America during the 1970s. Known as "The Mayor of Castro Street" even before he was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Harvey Milk's personal and political life is a story full of personal tragedies and political intrigues, assassinations at City Hall, massive riots in the streets, the miscarriage of justice, and the consolidation of gay power and gay hope. The Mayor of Castro Street is a story of personal tragedies and political intrigues, assassination in City Hall and massive riots in the streets, the miscarriage of justice and the consolidation of gay power and gay hope. Harvey Milk has been the subject of numerous books and movies, including the Academy Award-winning 1984 documentary, The Times of Harvey Milk. His life is also the basis of a 2008 major motion picture, Milk, starring Sean Penn.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A no-holds-barred character study and a history of the local gay movement . . . An investigative piece on the mechanics of big-city government in all its expedient, back-biting splendor." —The Washington Post "A remarkable work [of] biography, social history, and political machination . . . Exceptional." —The Los Angeles Times

Randy Shilts was one of the first openly gay journalists hired at a major newspaper and worked for the San Francisco Chronicle for thirteen years. He died of AIDS in 1994 at his home in the Sonoma

County redwoods in California. He was the author of several groundbreaking bestsellers, including *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic* (1987) and *Conduct Unbecoming: Lesbians and Gays in the U.S. Military* (1993).

I have been quoting extensively from this encyclopedic biography of Randy Shilts. Reading this book has helped me become more aware not only of the life and times of Harvey Milk and the politics of San Francisco and the nation in the late 1970s, but also to become a more sensitive human being when I encounter people who think differently than myself. I highly recommend this book

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. Randy Shilts is an amazing writer and he's very intelligent. The information in this book is engaging. It's just that there are no pictures in this ebook. If my memory serves me well, the copy I borrowed from a library has pictures. And according to Vince Emery, author of *The Harvey Milk Interviews*, Harvey did not have a relationship with an underaged boy. But in this book Shilts said so. I will give Harvey did benefit of the doubt. *The Mayor of Castro Street* is very intellectually stimulating. I noticed that he included bits and pieces of Harvey's connection to Jonestown. I wanted more details, but he at least mentioned it, which is more than most people do. He gives the exact amount of information and the specific details that I would have asked for. It's really excellent, except for a few mistakes (words), but they certainly did not ruin the book for me. Last but not least, as someone who lived in San Francisco for several years, I loved seeing the name of the streets and landmarks. They made me nostalgic. This is a book that I'd read repeatedly 'cause it's eye-opening. I recommend it to everyone. It's very good.

Harvey Milk has become, deservedly, something of a legend in the gay rights movement and in the broader history of San Francisco politics. In *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, Randy Shilts attempts to separate man from myth and then put it back together again. The result is a book which is accessible to both a casual and more academic audience. Shilts's writing style is fresh and casual. It is almost as though the man were sitting in a room having a conversation with you. Episodes are presented as a series of stories that flow throughout the book. So for example, we learn what Milk's lover Scott was doing when he heard the news of his assassination. The writing style lends itself well to a biography and works to make Milk more "human" than might otherwise be achieved. Shilts's writing style can be somewhat problematic, however, in that the story does not necessarily flow in a linear fashion. For the reader who is

interested in the story of Milk from a conceptual or casual interest, this should not be a problem. It could be more problematic, however, for the academic reader looking for a better picture of the linear timeline. A timeline in the appendices of this book would have served this purpose well. Perhaps one of the greatest joys of this book, however, is reading about Milk's fight in his own words. Shilts includes transcripts of some of Milk's more famous speeches in which we learn a great deal about Milk's political beliefs and his thought process in those short months immediately preceding and during his tenure as Supervisor. These speeches, included in the appendix, should not be skipped as they will help to ground the concepts discussed throughout the biography. Readers interested in the aftermath of Milk's assassination or in the politics of San Francisco since the assassination would be well-served to utilize a second reference as Shilts's writing stops in the early 1980's and a great deal has changed in that time. The Mayor of Castro Street is a well-researched and well-told history of Harvey Milk and the movement he helped to create. It should be of particular interest to the reader interested in LGBT literature in that it has so fundamentally informed the LGBT movement since. This is one book that I believe deserves to be on everyone's shelf.

This book reads like a breathy gossip column not a well-researched non-fiction book. There are no footnotes or chapter sources to let you know where particular information comes from - just an author's note that it is based on "interviews". I bought this book for my son to use as a source for a research paper and it was useless.

This is the book that chronicles the life of the man many LGBT people think of as the MLK of the LGBT rights movement-Former San Francisco city Supervisor Harvey Milk. Randy Shilts is the man who wrote this book, and it's an engrossing and inspiring read, despite it's sad ending. If you are LGBT and have not read this book yet, then damn, GO AND READ IT. It's a great chronicle of the life of a great Gay man and hero of our movement.

Great biography of a man who thought when he was 40 he had accomplished nothing, but who had earned his place in history even though he died before turning 50. Harvey Milk's move to San Francisco, his multiple campaigns to become the first openly gay man to be elected to office remind us of how far we have come and how far we have yet to go. Shilts does a masterful job of storytelling. And he lets us see the man, not just the myth.

Perfect! 10/10

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