

THE MILK MAN

GUS VAN SANT
RETURNS WITH
HIGHLY ANTICIPATED
PORTRAIT OF AN
AMERICAN HERO

BY JIM RADOSTA

“T

his is not my victory, it's yours and yours and yours. If a gay can win, it means that there *is* hope that the system can work for all minorities if we fight. We've given them hope.”

”

Although those words were spoken by San Francisco City Supervisor Harvey Milk way back in 1977, they could just as well apply to 2008. The United States elected Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., as its first black president Nov. 4, and it's easy to see how Milk's high profile as a minority politician—ended by an assassin's bullet 30 years ago this Thanksgiving—helped shape a country where candidates could be judged by their platforms instead of their race or sexual orientation.

When Milk delivered that victory speech, it was the first time an openly gay candidate had been elected in any big city nationwide. Fast-forward to May 2008, when Portland became the largest

city in the country to elect an openly gay mayor, Sam Adams. A few weeks later at the QDoc film festival, Adams attended a screening of the 1984 documentary *The Times of Harvey Milk*; there wasn't a dry eye in the house as the audience watched a man sacrifice his life in 1978 to lay the groundwork for such a monumental victory in 2008.

So, the timing couldn't be better for Portland gay director Gus Van Sant's *Milk*, a highly anticipated biopic that has been in the works for more than 25 years. The project boasts an Oscar-winning team—star Sean Penn (*Mystic River*) and producers Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks (*American*



Working with Sean Penn “was an interesting and exciting adventure,” according to Gus Van Sant.

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