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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

houston, red tape, aids, county, pw, protest, federal funds, lie, dying, funding, mayor, cut, demonstrators, city hall, drugs, act, city, ribbons, pwa, symbol



00:01

It's the holiday season in Houston. Across from city hall there's finally toasts traditional Mexican candles in paper bags surrounding a brightly lit five storey Christmas tree. But people who came to see the decorations last Thursday also saw something unexpected 24 members of Houston's ACT UP organization lying on the concrete in front of City Hall.



00:30

December 1 was World AIDS Day and to mark the occasion Houston act upstage to die in where demonstrators lie on the ground is a symbol of over 2000 deaths due to AIDS in Houston alone. The reason for the protest a three way squabble between Houston's mayor, the county judicial system and the city's aids Planning Committee. Over administration of federal funds. ACT UP organizer David Fowler explains.



00:55

You've got the city and the county fighting over who is going to get federal bucks. As long as the mayor and the county judge continue to argue our lives in jeopardy. We are here tonight, Mayor Whitmire And Judge John Lindsay. To show the blame lies squarely on your shoulders and your backs. The mayor and the county judge can cut ribbons. When a new statue is dedicated. They can cut ribbons when a new park opens up. If they can do that they can cut the red tape and drop the bucks.



01:34

The red tape Fowler mentions itself became one of the symbols in the protest as demonstrators next and wrists were bound with a long red ribbon. Meanwhile, Bruce Cook head of Houston's PWA coalition told the crowd of over 70 people how red tape of the government variety is killing people



01:52

were dying of red tape as effective drugs to keep us alive are made inaccessible to anyone without the money to buy them. As some insurance companies refuse to pay for drugs known to save lives because they don't have to. And because they fear for their profits. We're dying of red tape as government has turned a deaf ear on those infected and to our knees. were dying of red tape a slow moving legislation has taken years to respond to AIDS as paperwork and negotiations delay the opening of a housing unit for PW A's as panels and hearings and seminars, investigate ask questions and show very little that improves the well being of PW A's were dying of red tape and we must empower ourselves to cut through this red tape and live.



02:45

According to act UPS David Fowler this catch 22 situation holding up Houston's aids programs has placed the city far behind some comparatively less needy us communities in the amount of federal funds for AIDS received.



02:59

What are we doing here? If every time we turn on a proposal, it's denied. So what the conclusion has come to that it's a fight now between the county and city of who's gonna get the federal funding. The federal government is funding Orange County counties in San Diego which have less cases, less diagnosed cases less drug abuse than Houston Texas does. And they say they will not fund Houston until people start to learn together.



03:26

As the funding crisis worsens, act up plans to step up its protests to make city leaders understand the mess they've helped to create. Reporting from KPFT in Houston. I'm Rob ditto for this way out. Reporting for dateline Earth, I'm Rob Ditto.