



## The Freddie Mercury Story that Goes Untold in 'Bohemian Rhapsody'

**Laurie Marhoefer**, University of Washington

Millions of people tuned in to the Oscars to see “Bohemian Rhapsody,” the biopic of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury, compete for best picture, which “Green Book” ended up winning.

There were a lot of people cheering against “Bohemian Rhapsody.” The film has been dogged by accusations of **homophobia**, and the film’s director, Bryan Singer, **was accused of rape and sexual abuse**.

**But as a gay historian**, I keep coming back to something else – the tragic history that’s glaringly absent from this movie.

Mercury, along with all the other men and women who tested positive for HIV in the 1980s, was a victim not just of a pandemic but of the failures of his own governments and of the scorn of his fellow citizens. The laughable initial response to the HIV pandemic helped seal Mercury’s fate.

None of that is in the movie.