Rewriting History

How a memoir about AIDS and loss became a labor of love

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When Terry Connell read his father's version of their family tree in 2010, he noticed his late partner Stephan had been edited out of it.

That absence motivated Connell to publish Slaves to the Rhythm: A Love Story, a memoir of his life with Stephan, who died of AIDS-related illness in 1993.

In 1994, Connell completed the first round of edits to his manuscript and began sending it to publishers. While they were impressed with his story and writing, no one seemed willing to take on the subject of HIV/AIDS.

At the time, there was very little talk in book publishing about HIV. Agents and publishers told Connell there was no market for his kind of story.

He had a small victory when both The Philadelphia Inquirer Sunday Magazine and the Philadelphia Gay News ran a chapter of the book. After a year of struggling to get Slaves published, he decided in the mid-1990s to put the manuscript away.

Thanks to the advent of digital book publishing technology, that wasn't the end of the story: Connell has self-published his work nearly two decades after writing it.

The book reveals how he grew up in a Roman Catholic family, how a relationship built on love and respect helped him come out, how he lost the love of his life to the virus and how he overcame his loss. In short, the book tells the story of his family tree, unedited.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Slaves-Rhythm-HIV-20095-6313