Doctor as Friend

An epidemic brought them together. A podcast shares their tale.

January 4, 2021 By Trent Straube

As our feature story "Love in the Time of COVID-19," wonderfully illustrates, intimate and enriching relationships can take many forms, including platonic ones. To hear similar tales, tune in to Queer Meets Queer, a new podcast that highlights LGBTQ relationship stories. In the episode "An HIV Patient, a Doctor & a Friendship," long-term survivor Malcom Gregory Scott recounts how in 1994, he had a Kaposi sarcoma lesion on his left temple but couldn't afford treatment—until a buddy introduced him to Doug Ward, MD. Despite the mutual attraction, the two never hooked up, due to ethical standards on Ward's part but also because Scott had a rule to sleep only with people who had HIV. Yet a lifelong friendship developed. Listening to these men recount their history offers a fascinating (and fun!) glimpse into HIV history, including ACT UP Washington, DC; hookups via AOL chat rooms; and the advent of lifesaving treatment.

Courtesy of “Queer Meets Queer”

Queer Meets Queer describes itself as “a podcast dedicated to queer people telling the stories behind the most important relationships in their lives.” It’s based in Portland, Oregon, and hosted by four people, including Weston Anderson, 29, who prefers they/them pronouns and was diagnosed with HIV five years ago while living in China. “Because of my HIV status, I have gained the experience of being rejected romantically and/or sexually based purely on an identity,” they tell POZ. “I think that my HIV diagnosis has made me a more empathetic person.” That bodes well for a host who explores “the dizzying diversity of relationship models out there. I desperately want to talk about these relationships. I want to bring them out of the closet. I want to gain a better

understanding of what types of relationships are possible.”

(Logo) Courtesy of “Queer Meets Queer”, (phone) Istock

Anderson says future episodes will include HIV themes and advises people interested in telling their stories to visit QueerMeetsQueer.com. “LGBTQ+ relationship stories matter,” they add. “Following the height of the AIDS epidemic, we lost a generation of leaders, of mentors, of people who could show us the way. We need these stories. I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say that these stories will save lives.”

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