



Body Counts by Sean Strub

January 14, 2014 By [Shawn Decker](#)

✖ Sean Strub's memoir, *Body Counts*, hit stores yesterday, and Gwenn and I were fortunate enough to get to our local bookstore just in time to nab the last three copies: one for us, one for my mom (who is a huge fan) and one for a future Labtest Contest prize.

But, don't wait around for me to get labwork done in March for a chance to win this book, if you have any interest in the history of the gay community, the politics of sex and the realities of living with HIV- you've gotta get this book. [Click on Sean's face to read an excerpt of *Body Counts* in the latest issue of Poz.](#)

Sean has been one of the most influential people in my life as a positoid. Without him, I really have no idea what I'd be doing right now. In 1996, after nearly a decade of living with HIV, I decided to speak out about being positive for the first time; I was 20, still living with my parents in Waynesboro, Virginia, and had just put up a website chronicling my thoughts on living with HIV. My doctor fed me a few issues of Poz Magazine and I was stunned that a magazine solely about HIV existed. I poured through its pages and loved what I read. I sent a fan letter to the editor-in-chief, Sean, and shared where I was at in my own journey with HIV.

A month or so later, I was watching wrestling and the phone rang. "Shawn, telephone!" My dad/secretary called out through my bedroom door. My beloved Ric Flair had just lost his World Title; I was bummed but took the call anyway. It was Sean. He invited me to NYC to be interviewed for the magazine and shortly thereafter I started writing my Positoid column.

✖ When I learned that my original godparents had broken ties with my family in the 1980s after my diagnosis because their church said AIDS was God's punishment against gay people, I asked Sean and Steve Schalchlin (another beloved mentor) to be my surrogate Godparents. They both readily accepted.

All of that personal history and admiration aside, it was hard to tear myself from *Body Counts* to post this blog- it really is an incredible book and an honest, forthcoming account from someone who has a truly unique set of experiences to draw from.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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<http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/body-counts-by-sean>