Must Watch Television: Pedro on MTV

March 30, 2009 By Shawn Decker

MTV to Air Biopic on Pedro Zamora

I was excited to read in POZ Magazine about a made-for-TV movie about Pedro Zamora, entitled "Pedro", which will air at 8 pm this Wednesday. In case you're not familiar, Pedro was the HIV-positive young man who appeared on MTV's Real World San Francisco in 1994.

He's someone I'll never forget.

At the time that he was on the show, I'd just graduated from high school and had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I never thought that I'd share my personal experiences with HIV with my peers, or use any of the medical realities I'd encountered as a means to educate others.

Pedro changed all of that.

Today, I'm very outspoken about my status, but in 1994? No way. Yet, I was so interested in Pedro's life. I loved that he was on there doing his thing. It planted a seed in my mind that took another two years to grow.

I was deeply saddened in the fall of 1994 when Pedro passed to spirit, just months after I got to "know him" through the show. A year and a half later, I was still unsure as to what my future held. I started to feel like I was going to survive HIV, yet the fear of having to fill an entire life with purpose of any sort was paralyzing.

At 20, during a Real World Reunion special, I was moved when Pedro's roommate, Judd Winick, called on audience members to honor Pedro's spirit. "Do something," he said, not once but twice, choking up with emotion.

The words hit me like a ton of bricks. I was reminded of Pedro's impact, thanks to someone who really did get to know him, Judd.

A couple of months later I launched my first web site, My Pet Virus, and never looked back. If you remember Pedro Zamora with the same fondness that I do, be sure to tune in to MTV this Wednesday at 8 pm (EST).

Also, do yourself a favor and order Judd Winick's comic-style homage to his friend, "Pedro & Me".

It’s as touching a tribute as you’ll ever read. Have your crying hanky on hand. And remember, if you’re ever thinking you don’t fit in or don’t matter, just think real hard… surround yourself with people who love you.

And then do something. Funny story about my encounter with Pedro’s volatile Real World roommate, Puck, in the next blog.

Positively Yours,

Shawn

Share the Blog. *Not the Virus.* **Please email me some more!**

If you want to read a Poz column I wrote in 2001 about Pedro, and my own attempts to weasel my way onto The Real World to carry his positoid torch, click here.

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