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RUNNING IN BED

by Jeffrey Sharlach

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BIOGRAPHY: JEFFREY SHARLACH **Author of *Running in Bed*** **(Two Harbors Press; May, 2012)**

Jeffrey Sharlach became a widower at age 40. That was when Ken Williams, his lover, best friend and life-partner of 13 years, succumbed to AIDS at 34. The year was 1994, not long after the couple decided to leave New York City for Miami. For years, AIDS had spread mercilessly through the gay communities in America's urban centers before anyone knew of its existence and by 1993, the devastating disease had become the leading cause of death among persons 25 to 44 years old in the United States.¹

With friends sick and dying, and as his partner's health waned, Sharlach worried about how he'd be able to get the necessary care in the walk-up apartment where they lived in New York's Greenwich Village. And his career had also taken a turn of uncertainty as his boss and mentor, the CEO of the international public relations agency where he worked, had been forced out by the marketing conglomerate which owned the firm.

He decided it was time to change his life. He resigned his high-paying New York PR agency position and moved with Ken to Miami Beach where he planned to teach college students, do some PR consulting work from home, and work on the novel he had talked about writing for many years.

Sharlach did begin teaching in the School of Communications at University of Miami in 1993, and with Miami fast-developing as the business capital of Latin America at the time, found more than enough work to keep busy with the consulting business he set up in the living room of his new Miami Beach apartment. In fact there was so much work, that he resigned his teaching post less than a year later. And plans for the novel were put on hold.

Although hoping the relaxed pace and better weather would be helpful to Ken, he passed away not long after leaving New York. In his grief, Sharlach poured his energy into his consulting business. He moved it out of his apartment, hired his first employee, and today JeffreyGroup, with five offices is the leading independent PR and marketing agency targeting Latin America and US Hispanic audiences.

It was more than 15 years later though that he finally got around to writing that novel, *Running in Bed*, which is being published May, 2012, by Two Harbors Press.

Jeffrey Sharlach was born in Stamford, Connecticut in 1953, the oldest of three children to parents also born in Stamford, a suburb of New York City. His father was a businessman, running a small chain of retail stores and his mother was a homemaker. It was a typical suburban, upbringing in 1950's United States: a country brimming at the time with unbridled optimism, growing wealth and new

opportunities. Still beneath the bright surface there were darker rumblings of the nascent African-American civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and for Sharlach, his own personal struggle with homosexuality.

Sharlach kept his sexual urges well under wraps as he attended the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University (B.S.J., 1974) and then the New York University School of Law (J.D., 1977). He never practiced law though and after graduation from law school returned to being a full-time as a news writer and producer at WINS radio in New York where he had worked part-time during law school.

He was only there for a few months when a recruiter called him about a job in the TV-Radio department of a major international PR firm, Carl Byoir & Associates. He started work there in August, 1977, the beginning of marketing and public relations career which continues today. Following Carl Byoir, he also worked at Burson-Marsteller, Hill & Knowlton and Saatchi & Saatchi before founding JeffreyGroup in 1993.

He came out as a gay man at 24 shortly after beginning work at his first full time job following graduation in 1977. He was living in New York's Greenwich Village, still basking in the golden glow of the post Stonewall decade before the darkness of AIDS descended. His early single years were spent in the heyday of disco and clubs like Studio 54 and The Saint. It was at a club, The Last Resort on First Avenue that that he met his first partner, Ken Williams, a social worker, in 1981 and they were together until Ken's death in 1994.

Sharlach continued to live in Miami nurturing the growth of JeffreyGroup as the firm opened offices in Buenos Aires, Mexico City and São Paulo. As the agency expanded to target U.S. Hispanic consumers, the opening of a New York office, finally provided him with the opportunity to move back to the city he loved. In 2007, he was appointed Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Management Communication at the NYU Stern School of Business where he currently teaches as well as continuing to serve as Chairman and CEO of JeffreyGroup.

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ⁱ (<http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/InSite?page=kb-01-03#S1.4X>)