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As a politics-obsessed Georgetown freshman, Sean Strub arrived in Washington, D.C., from Iowa in 1976, with a plum part-time job running a Senate elevator in the U.S. Capitol. He also harbored a terrifying secret: his attraction to men. As Strub explored the capital's political and social circles, he discovered a parallel world where powerful men lived double lives shrouded in shame. When the AIDS epidemic hit in the early 1980s, Strub was living in New York and soon found himself attending "more funerals than birthday parties." Scared and angry, he turned to radical activism to combat discrimination and demand research. Strub takes readers through his own diagnosis and inside ACT UP, the activist organization that transformed a stigmatized cause into one of the defining political movements of our time. From the New York of Studio 54 and Andy Warhol's Factory to the intersection of politics and burgeoning LGBT and AIDS movements, Strub's story crackles with history. He recounts his role in shocking AIDS demonstrations at St. Patrick's Cathedral and the home of U.S. Senator Jesse Helms. Body Counts is a vivid portrait of a tumultuous era, with an astonishing cast of characters, including Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Keith Haring, Bill Clinton, and Yoko Ono. By the time a new class of drugs transformed the epidemic in 1996, Strub was emaciated and covered with Kaposi's sarcoma lesions, the scarlet letter of AIDS. He was among the fortunate who returned, Lazaruslike, from the brink of death. Strub has written a vital, inspiring memoir, unprecedented in scope, about this deeply important period of American history.

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