

Sean Phou

by Doug Kent

A horrible civil war in which millions of persons lost their lives is the backdrop for our Mr. September (Mr. S) story. Refugees fled their country to avoid certain death, and while some did not make it, many people were relocated here in the U.S. It was the summer of 1981, two such refugees landed in Providence Rhode Island. The transition was difficult for them, but on December 21, 1981, they welcomed their first child into the world. Little did they know that he would achieve the distinction of Mr. September.

Mr. S experienced many challenges in his new country, but his early childhood was consumed with his parents transition, his brothers and sister, and his education. Things did not come easy, but the family did settle in and Mr. S attended elementary, Jr, and most of his High School in Providence. Mr. S at the age of 12 began to notice that he had problems concentrating on his studies, and was consumed with attractions to some of his male teachers. He would fantasize being with them and this lack of concentration resulted in just adequate grades. To avoid failing High School, Mr. S, signed himself out of his school and moved to Lynn, Massachusetts to live with his Great Uncle. He graduated from Lynn English High School in 1999.

PAY ATTENTION NOW: This is where the story gets very complicated. In Mr. S's culture, it was traditional for parents to arrange marriages. Mr. S wanted to travel back to his native country, and he did. It was going to be a wonderful 4 week trip. Much to his surprise, his parents had arranged for him to marry while he was in his native country. He had no choice while in this foreign land and, at the tender age of 18, was married. However, his wife could not travel back to this country and it would take some time for her to get the proper papers to do so.

Now married, and back in Providence, Mr. S met a man who quickly became the focus of his life. What a difficult situation for Mr. S. He was totally closeted to his family and friends, but he had met a wonderful, caring man that he fell in love with.

While working full time in Providence, maintaining his ties to his family and most of his close friends, he also wanted to spend as much time as he could with his new love. This new man was considerably older and free to do what he wanted. Secrecy, became the name of the game. Stress was his middle name.

ARE YOU STILL PAYING ATTENTION? His wife did get her papers and came to this country. Mr. S knew he did not want to consummate the marriage, so he moved out of his parents home and moved in with his partner. His wife ,however, moved in with his parents. Mr. S is now working in his new partner's business and to this point, still very much closeted. It was in 2005 that his closest cousin, who was living in California, called and simply asked Mr. S a question, "Are you gay". Stunned, but not surprised, Mr. S took this opportunity and answered truthfully. He then came out to his sister, then to his family. It was done. Mr. S had the weight of the world lifted from his shoulders, he could now live his life as it was intended. He did marry his wife in this country so she could stay here, but never consummated that marriage.

In January 2010, his partner officially retired, and they moved to South Florida. Mr. S became a personal trainer. He works out at the gym and is involved with various activities in Prime Timers. He and his partner travel extensively throughout the world and are engaged with their close circle of friends. Can you identify this engaging, articulate, young man with a fascinating life story?

