

TRIPLE ECHO

At the Crossroads of the Sexes

■ Volume 3 Number 4 2002



Lessons from the Past: Gay, Lesbian, and Trans History

The Loneliness of Gloria Hemingway.

Plus: Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief, Growing up with
transgender parents, Tara Taylor, and more.

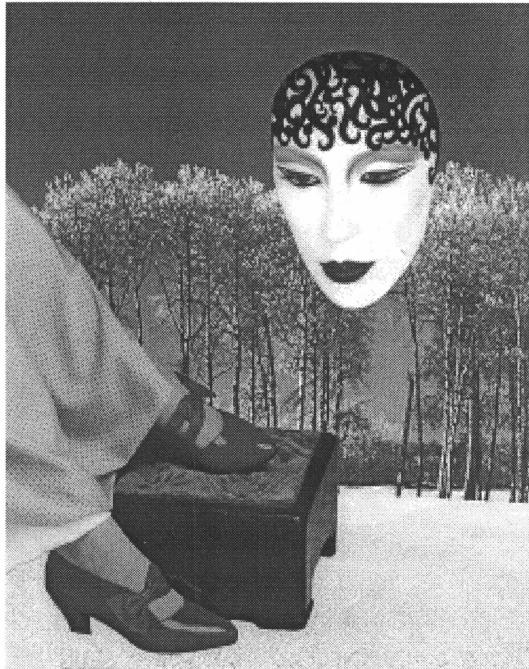


Collage by Rachel Steen

Triple Echo

Volume 3 Number 4 March-June 2002

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The end of the line, almost

At some point while I was putting to bed the last issue of *Triple Echo*, I realized that I was coming to the end of the line. Although we've managed to publish many issues of which I'm proud, *Triple Echo*'s development has stalled. Furthermore, I no longer have the energy or the financial resources to try to elevate it to the kind of publication I hoped it would be when I first started it. So I decided I'd fulfill my commitment to our current subscribers and would publish three more issues, two more after this one, and then *Triple Echo* would cease publishing.

As I look back on it now, part of the failure of this publication was preordained from the very beginning. I'm the sort of person who can plan something forever just so long as I don't have to go through with actually doing it. Being aware of my own character flaws, I realized that the best and surest way to fulfill my long standing dream of publishing an intelligent trans publication was to do as little planning as necessary and simply jump into it. This is basically the way *Triple Echo* came into being. The biggest problem with this approach has been that I didn't assemble an editorial board, a group of people that could contribute to the project and keep it going in times of doubt. It takes a lot of work to publish a publication like this, particularly if you've set ambitious standards for it; and I realize now that it's impossible to achieve those standards without a team of people supporting you.

I must also take responsibility for the second failing that is responsible for the publication's lack of growth. As one who still holds a conventional job and is not out to most of her co-workers, I was unable to commit myself entirely to the project. It's a lot easier to market a publication if you're gadding about town and getting your name in the papers as the celebrated publisher of *Triple Echo*. I have in effect been doing my marketing with one hand tied behind my back.

I'm not recounting these failures as a form of self-flagellation, only to say that I've learned a lot from publishing *Triple Echo*. Although it's been difficult at times, it's also been an enormously gratifying experience. When I first

started it, I was excited by the evolution of the trans community and wanted to be part of its emergence. While I still have a lot of faith that the darkest times are behind us and that our future awaits, I think my enthusiasm obscured the fact that these things still take more time than you'd like them to. I think *Triple Echo*, or at least the premise behind it, is ahead of its time in Canada. One day another publication that celebrates trans people's stories and our history will come along. It will demonstrate to the rest of the world that gender conformity has never been a normal human experience; and if done properly, it will become chic, as chic as any gay chic we have today. But that won't happen now, and *Triple Echo* won't be the publication to do it.

Before I finish this goodbye editorial two issues before the actual goodbye, I want to thank *Triple Echo*'s resident artist, Rachel Steen, for contributing so much of the art that gives *Triple Echo* its distinctive look. I may not have assembled a team of writers but I lucked out when I got Rachel to come on board. Her support and artwork have been invaluable and the project would have foundered earlier without her.

Also, thanks to our devoted subscribers. The subscription base has actually increased with every issue, but at this rate it will take years to be financially viable, and I no longer have the time. While we could have used a few more of you, to paraphrase a beer commercial, those of you who liked us liked us a lot. Your support has been deeply appreciated.

Since it doesn't seem imperative to stick to a quarterly publishing schedule after you've announced your own demise, I doubt I'll be able to put the next issue out promptly in three months. Still, I expect to publish the final two issues this year. This will give us some time to have fun and go out with a flourish.

Thanks again to all of you who have supported us.

Teddy Michaels

Supporting street-active trans people

For starters, please accept my apologies for taking so long to reply to your letter dated July 27th, 2001. We have been so intensely busy down here and I have not had a chance to go through my correspondence until this time. Meal Trans, being one of the few service providers for transsexual and transgender people, certainly is kept running off of our feet trying to serve the needs of lower income youth, and street active TS/TG people in Toronto. However I truly meant to get back to you sooner, so again I apologize for the late reply.

I have had many great opportunities to read *Triple Echo* and I want to congratulate you on what is a truly groovy publication. I particularly like how the magazine takes the time to revisit trans-activists and communities of the past - it truly lays a wonderful foundation for young transsexuals and transgender people to know they have a history, culture, and belong to a proud line of wonderful people who have done things and changed the world around them.

I also want to thank you on your kind praise of our service. It reminds us all here that working at a frontline level can be a lot of hard work, frustrating at times, but it really does help our estimated 200 regular clients get where they need to go and does wonders in promoting community development for the trans-communities of the future. So again thank you.

I would love to take you up on your offer to provide us with the complete set of *Triple Echo* back issues. The information in the magazine is relevant to communities across Canada, but I think it is also comforting to the many TS/TG people, including myself, who were once part of the vibrant community in Ottawa and want to hear how things are back home.

Christina Strang, Co-ordinator
The Meal Trans Programme (The 519)

Meal Trans is a multi-service programme primarily for lower income and/or street-active transsexuals and transgendered people. There is a weekly drop-in every Monday night from 6 to 10 pm at The 519 Church Street Community Centre, 519 Church Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 2C9. Web site: www.the519.org

Triple Echo

AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE SEXES

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The principal aims of *Triple Echo* are to tell trans people's stories; provide informed comment on issues of gender as they may relate to trans identified persons and to facilitate awareness of trans people's lives.

Submissions and letters to the editor are welcome. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse any submission. Submissions will not be returned. Please do not send originals or self addressed envelopes. Views expressed or implied are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

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Television

Intersex people on TV

Television is finally discovering intersex people and their often insightful views on gender.

In January, the Learning Channel as part of their somewhat sensationally named series *Incredible Medical Mysteries* aired a show that came down decidedly in favour of allowing intersex babies to grow up without early surgical intervention so that they could decide for themselves what gender they choose to be. Surely nothing exposes society's profound anxiety over gender than this issue. The practise of assigning gender to an intersex baby would have been dead long ago but for the medical profession's obstinacy and society's ignorance. One of the stories in the program featured a mother's attempts to prevent her adopted son Patrick from being "fixed". The doctors decided he'd be better off as a girl because he had a single testicle. They told her the single testicle would become cancerous and performed surgery on him, turning him into a eunuch. His mother demanded to see the pathologists report, however, which indicated that the testicle was "normal, healthy tissue". Yes, lawsuits have been filed.

How does this stuff continue to happen? Do only trans and intersex people see the lunacy of this type of gender surgery?

Last October, the PBS science series *Nova* also examined the issue of intersex babies and sex assignment through early surgery. The program, titled *Sex: Unknown*, although graphic was intelligently done and avoided sensationalism.

Crossing Jordan

Also last October, *Crossing Jordan*, a new series starring Edmonton native Jill Hennessey, presented a remarkably intelligent discussion on the spiritual meaning to the various ways in which the human body is prepared for the afterlife. In this particular episode, a pre-op male-to-female transsexual dying of prostate cancer - "God's little joke," she calls it - asks that the medical examiner perform the surgery after she dies so that her death certificate would indicate she was female. The episode discusses how different religions demand that the body be prepared in certain ways. There is also a parallel story of a rabbi instructing the pathologists what they can and cannot do to the body of a Jewish man during an autopsy. It reveals the Jewish belief in the sanctity of the body and that repairing the body of the deceased after the autopsy would restore his true self. These discussions ultimately influence the medical examiner to perform the surgery on the transsexual. As if that weren't enough, there is also the unusual symbolism of the art of bonsai running through the entire episode. For the Japanese, bonsai represents the union of man, soul and nature. In the episode, one of the characters, while clipping her bonsai trees mused: "Sometimes I wonder if it's worth the trouble, but then I see such perfection". An unusually thoughtful and thematically cohesive piece of network television.

Jin Xing: Chinese TS pioneer

CBC Newsworld's documentary series *The Passionate Eye* screened *Colonel Jin Xing: A Unique Destiny* on December 17th. Produced by



Jin Xing: dancer, mother, "selfish and disgusting".

Sunset Presse and directed by Sylvie Levey, it's the story of 34 year old Jin Xing, Shanghai's principal dancer and choreographer who, up to 1995, was a colonel in the People's Liberation Army.

Jin Xing's story is remarkable since until recently anyone exhibiting the slightest sexual variation was liable to be confined to a Chinese psychiatric hospital. Jin Xing's surgery has opened the way for others, although the surgery is still rigidly controlled. (I know. Like it's not here.) Like most transsexuals, Jin Xing just wants to get on with her life and wishes to talk mostly about her dance career. This has proven difficult, however, as with her mother's help she has just adopted a little girl and become a mother herself. Her adoption was possible because of the number of female children available to adopt in China and because of that society's belief that women - even transsexual women apparently - should be wives and mothers. In an Internet survey, 90% of the people who responded felt that she should be a mother and 10% thought she was selfish and disgusting.

Politics

Enza "Supermodel" Anderson, who made headlines in 2000 by challenging Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman for the mayor's office, recently made a run at the leadership of the Canadian Alliance Party. Enza's campaign progressed from being a curiosity piece from somewhere in the back pages of the papers to front page news when it was discovered that a number of Bay Street bigwigs attended a Toronto fundraiser for her (dress code: "business attire or drag"). Unfortunately, she fell short of the necessary \$25,000 entrance fee.

In an opinion piece published in the *Ottawa Citizen* in early January, Enza makes some astute comments about the problems the Canadian Alliance has had attracting voters. "The big problem is that there have always been some people in the Canadian Alliance, and the Reform party before it, who have hinted, or even said outright, that some voters just aren't welcome. Remember the "let's send homosexuals to the back of the shop" sentiments of a few years back? So creepy it made my wig curl."

This is the wisdom of the fool, of course. What she says is true, but as a self described drag queen she knows she will never be taken seriously enough for her message to be taken seriously. It's too bad, because the Canadian Alliance, if it's ever to become a credible party that Canadians might think worthy of governing, ought to be paying attention.

"Another Alliance problem is that there always seems to be hidden agendas at work. No sooner were the 'unhealthy lifestyle' words out of Grant Hill's mouth (for the second time), than he suggested that his views on homosexuality shouldn't be an issue. But politicians can't pick

and choose which of their views the public listens to. It's as if he wore the wrong handbag with his shoes and then asked everyone not to notice."

Satire is always useful and no one pretends that Enza's campaign is anything but satire, front page news notwithstanding. Duncan Jackman, a supporter of the Progressive Conservative party and son of the former lieutenant-governor of Ontario Hal Jackman said: "What I'm saying is, as long as the Tories and the Alliance remain two separate parties, then I'm not going to take them any more seriously than I take Enza. At least this will be more fun."

Ah, there's the rub for most trans people. Does Enza's run at the Canadian Alliance leadership simply reinforce the idea that trans people are not to be taken seriously, or does it normalize the concept of transgender? The average person still wouldn't know the difference between a drag queen and any of the other categories under which we identify ourselves. (In the little biographical blurb at the end of Enza's article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, they

called her a 37 year old "Toronto transvestite.") She is undoubtedly not breaking any new territory because she resides firmly in the only traditional place trans people have been accepted: on stage and playing the fool. On the other hand, Enza is clearly intelligent and has no shortage of

"...politicians can't pick and choose which of their views the public listens to. It's as if he wore the wrong handbag with his shoes and then asked everyone not to notice."

charisma. It's hard to dislike her. In the simplistic way that people think about trans people that can't be a bad thing either.

Ultimately Enza's run for the leadership can't be defined by whether it is good or bad for trans people. (It's a moot point, in any case, it being a free country.) It's perhaps best to look at this in a historical perspective. One day a trans person will be a serious contender for elected office and will be taken seriously. Sadly, now is not the time. Enza's leadership bid is where we are now and she's doing a fine job pulling it off. The lesson of gay and lesbian history is that progress in achieving rights and acceptance is not so much a carefully planned strategy as it is a bunch of diverse people doing their own thing.



Publications

Zenith Digest is no more

The *Zenith Digest*, the premier newsletter for transsexuals in Canada, has ceased publication. Editor Joanne McCracken, who has also been performing duties as layout editor since December 1999, could no longer commit herself to the time required to publish the newsletter in its current magazine format. A simpler publication will continue to be published.

"With Stephanie (Castle) deciding to bow out of the directorship, and only a handful (of) active directors left, publishing a large and comprehensive newsmagazine does not fit in with the size of the organization," Ms. McCracken said.

The *Zenith Digest* was published by the Zenith Foundation as a benefit of membership and to raise the profile of the Foundation, whose objectives are to improve the "security and circumstances of people with gender dysphoria." It was first published in a magazine format in 1997 in the hope that a professional publication would attract sufficient revenue to be profitable. Over time, however, the original editorial team gradually left and most of the work fell to Ms. McCracken, a not uncommon scenario for many trans enterprises.

The Zenith Foundation can be reached at Box 45006, 4326 Dunbar Street, Vancouver, BC V6S 2G3; e-mail zenithfoundation@hotmail.com; fax (604) 266-4469; web www.zenithfoundation.ca

Pageants

Last April, the world as a whole and the Miss Universe pageant in particular overcame their comical fit of trans anxiety over rumours that Miss France had been born male by calling in the doctors. To their relief, she was declared a woman, although the fuss may have prevented her from winning the title. Well, Miss France got the consolation prize in December when she was named Miss Europe 2001 during a pageant in Beirut.

Perhaps fearing the trans barbarians may be at their gates, however, the application for the Mrs. Canada pageant now requires that contestants confirm that they were born female. It's hard to get too worked up over this snub. If you're looking for social acceptance, pageants probably aren't a good place to look. For years rule no. 7 of the Miss America Pageant's contestant's contract said they must be "in good health and of the white race."

The Workplace

TS teacher sacked on first day

A transsexual supply teacher has been given a 3,700 pound sterling payout after a primary school sacked her after just one day.

Natasha Thoday, 35, was asked not to return after one pupil asked the head "Did Natasha used to be a man like Hayley in Coronation Street?" Head teacher Andrew Kearney said he had to let her go because the children could not concentrate on their work.

Natasha, who has lived as a woman for two years, says she has been "vindicated" by the out-of-court settlement paid by Telecombe Cliffs primary school and East Sussex County Council.

"If I was doing a bad job then any criticism would have been fair but I think it is wrong for me to be criticised about my gender," Natasha said. (*International Express*, October 2001)

Items for discussion:

1. Will Natasha ever get another job teaching?
2. Will the Telecombe Cliffs primary school and East Sussex County Council ever hire another transsexual?
3. Would a mannish woman have been fired?
4. Who really lost in this case: trans people or the Telecombe Cliffs and East Sussex County Council?

Trans girl aims to be both mom and dad

More trans anxiety surfaced in December when 16 year old Jamie Cooper of Birmingham, England who is currently undergoing transition wanted to freeze his sperm so he could father a child when he becomes a woman. Church leaders said the move was unethical and could set a "dangerous" precedent. Peter Kearney, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, said it would be "very wrong" because it turns children into commodities. (A practise evidently reserved only for "normal" people.) Jamie began his transition when he turned 16 on August 25th, but must wait two more years before she can get the operation.

The Loneliness of Gloria Hemingway

Being clinically depressed and being trans is a tough combination.

By Teddy Michaels

Last October Gloria Hemingway, who was born Gregory, the youngest son of Ernest Hemingway, died at age 69 of what the Miami medical examiner's office said was hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Hemingway had been arrested in a Key Biscayne park and charged for indecent exposure and resisting arrest without violence. Police had nabbed her while she was in the process of putting on her underwear, but she also had a dress and shoes with her at the time. During the arrest, she screamed and refused to be handcuffed.

"He said his name was Gloria," officer Nelia Real said. "He looked like a man, but his nails were painted and he was wearing jewelry and makeup. At times he was very coherent, but other times he didn't make any sense."

Hemingway died in a cell at a women's jail. Janelle Hall, a spokeswoman for the county corrections department, said Hemingway had undergone a sex change operation.

Growing up as the son of the famous macho writer, Gloria's relationship with her father naturally stimulated some superficial speculation from the press about what possible influence it might have had on the creation of her trans identity. As Gregory, Gloria had written a well received book called *Papa: A Personal Memoir* in which she described her sometimes difficult life with father. Written in 1976, *Papa: A Personal Memoir* does not mention Gloria's transgenderism, although she later claimed that Ernest Hemingway was aware of it. However she does ponder her father's macho posturing and quotes the puzzlement of writer Marjorie Kinnan

Rawlings, who visited Hemingway in the Bahamas and wondered,

Why does a man with such great talent continually deny his sensitivity and overprotect his masculinity? He is so virile and so vast - why does he waste time roughhousing with playboys, trying to catch the biggest fish, to bring that fish in the fastest, to drink the most?

Gloria suggests, probably not seriously, that Hemingway was just "overcompensating for being dressed as a girl for the first two years of his life." (This refers to the common practice of dressing all infants in girl's clothes. The tradition died out at the beginning of the 20th century) The comment is interesting in that Gloria was doing a bit of overcompensating herself. As a boy, she was an excellent shooter - at age eleven she had tied for the shooting championship of Cuba - and often accompanied her father on hunting and fishing expeditions.

I became inured to killing at an early age and for a while later on out in Africa, I was like that character in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" who would kill anything, absolutely anything. But not anymore. I can even feel the life in a great tree now, and I wince when I see one girdled and know it must die.

Gloria's daughter from her first marriage, Lorian, published her own memoir called *Walk on Water*. A beautifully written book nominated for the 1999 Pulitzer Prize, *Walk on Water* suggests Ernest Hemingway's legacy survived several generations. Lorian grew up with her grandfather's fondness for

fishng, but as she became addicted to alcohol ("the great paralyzer of conscience"), she realized she did it less humanely.

There seems no end to murder once you start. It becomes as natural as sleep, as effortless as breathing, and you can suspend judgement of yourself until that time when conscience slips back into place, if it ever does, and you can forget who you are in all of it and focus clear and hard on the task at hand. It's easy and those who say it isn't lie.

It's striking how similar the sentiment in this passage is to the one in Gloria's book. Gloria's problems with alcohol, another family legacy, began early. She started drinking, with Ernest's permission, when she was ten or eleven. Hemingway had confidence that she'd set her own limits, but given her future problems with addiction, and the difficulty she had in accepting her trans self, this was clearly not a good idea. She claimed she spent "hundreds of thousands of dollars trying not to be a transvestite". She received electric shock treatment and suffered several nervous breakdowns.

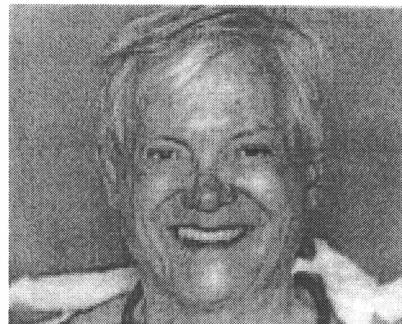
Gloria had thought of being a writer, much to Hemingway's delight, but soon discovered she wasn't very good at it. Instead, she entered medical school and became a doctor. As Gregory, she practiced medicine as a country physician in Montana, but eventually lost her license as she wrestled with her chronic depression. She married four times, the last time in 1992. The marriage ended in divorce in 1995.

Towards the end of her life she became something of a drifter, living in cars, motels or friends' houses. "I would say he was tormented," said one acquaintance.

Lorian's portrait of her father in *Walk on Water* betrays an antipathy to Gloria's transgenderism. 'Around Mother's Day, in the Hallmark section, I am tortured. There are no greeting cards that read, "Thinking of you fondly, transvestite Dad." Or, "On your special day, Whatsit.'" Gloria and Lorian's mother divorced when she was six, and her father had no contact with her until a fishing trip they took together when Lorian was sixteen.

I barely knew the man and fished with him only once in the purple waters of the Gulf Stream. It was during a time when he still clung desperately to manhood, or perhaps he merely paraded his remembrance of it for my benefit, so obviously was I seeking a father.

The fishing trip was not especially successful. Gloria hooks a marlin, but then loses it in the unsuccessful battle to reel it in. "My father looked broken. There is no other word for it. He sat crumpled in the chair, folded in on himself, his face an odd off-



white..."

At this time, Lorian knew nothing of her father's illness, "depressions so bludgeoning in their force that he would lock himself in a room for weeks at a time, and willingly commit himself for courses of electroshock therapy." In time, however, she understood the nature of her father's struggles and had more compassion for Gloria the person, if not necessarily for Gloria's transgenderism.

"I loved him and he was a good man," she said, upon Gloria's death. "He was a man of great compassion and self-searching, and he bore the necessary cross of being human. I believe the thing he wanted most of all was to please others and be loved."

It is typical that she refers to her father as "he", like so many others did. It is obvious Gloria was never accepted as a woman. I can't help thinking that Gloria's transgenderism was seen as another facet of her mental illness, and that people dealt with it in the typical way people deal with all mental illness, by denying it.

Still, Lorian Hemingway was on the right track when she said her father "wanted most of all...to please others". Gloria wrote that at her father's funeral, she "felt profound relief when they lowered my father's body into the ground and I realized that he was really dead, that I couldn't disappoint him, couldn't hurt him anymore."

It's a sad admission from one who seemed more sinned against than sinning.

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Lessons from the Past

Gay and lesbian history has some surprising parallels with trans history. Why, we can almost see where we're going.

By *Teddy Michaels*

Most trans people do not spend much time thinking about the paper trail (or nowadays more likely a byte trail) that they leave behind them as they live their lives. And yet this trail is the stuff that future historians will look at to piece together the type of lives we lived at the beginning of the 21st century. Reconstructing the past lives of trans people is not an easy task, as most of our history is unrecoverable. Invisible people rarely leave evidence of their existence for future generations to ponder. This is our loss, of course, as there is much to learn and much self-affirmation in knowing that we have a long history behind us.

To flesh out some aspects of trans history and to learn where we might possibly be going, it is instructive to have a look at gay and lesbian history. While our objectives as trans people often differ fundamentally from those of gays and lesbians,



nevertheless the social history of gays and lesbians and their struggle for rights and respect has numerous parallels to our own situation.

For everyone who is tired of all the infighting in the trans community, perhaps the most encouraging fact we can take away from gay and lesbian history is that they didn't particularly get along with each other either. It is easy to think that gays and lesbians have secured more rights for themselves by presenting a unified front to the world. Well, hardly! Throughout their history, gays and lesbians have fractured along policy, class, race, gender, and even transgender lines.

Photo above: 1927 drag ball held in Harlem. Photographer James VanDerZee created this portrait of one of the participants. (Photo Donna Vanderzee)

One member of the Mattachine Society said that the sight “of screaming queens forming chorus lines and kicking went against everything that I wanted people to think about homosexuals...that we were a bunch of drag queens in the Village acting disorderly and tacky and cheap.”

The major division that occurred, and continues to occur, is relevant for trans people because it involves gender conformity. During the 1950s, many homosexual rights organizations operated beneath the radar of mainstream society. Their focus was primarily to convince the general population that homosexuals were just like everyone else, for the most part anyway. They emphasized education and homosexual assimilation, and did so in a non-confrontational manner. This emphasis on “normalcy” was not especially welcoming to the gay transvestite, who was the absolute stereotype of all things gay in the 1950s and therefore a symbol to be shunned. In a decade that put a lot of stock in conformity, homosexuals were conforming as much as possible. It may seem a self-defeating strategy to repress as much as possible large segments of the gay population and to hope that society notices only the “respectable” homosexuals, but it was very much a product of its time. The goal was not so much to overthrow your oppression as it was to achieve a little breathing room in a repressive society.

During the 1950s, the names of the dominant American gay and lesbian organizations were so vague that it was impossible to determine just what it was they stood for. The average American, upon hearing of the Mattachine Society, would never know it was a male homosexual organization, no more than he could imagine that the Daughters of Bilitis represented lesbians. The Mattachine Society was named after the masked jesters who spoke out against authority in medieval times. Meanwhile, the Daughters of Bilitis took their name from an even more impossibly arcane source: a poem by a nineteenth century French writer whose “Songs of Bilitis” were supposedly those of a poetess who lived on Lesbos at the time of Sappho. One of the founders said, “Bilitis would mean something to us, but not to any outsider. If anyone asked us, we could always say we belonged to a poetry club.”

If this seems ludicrous today, well, one should only consider the times. Consider also the name of one of the first trans organizations that appeared in the 1960s: Tri Sigma. Tri Sigma is of course Tri-Ess, which is of course the Society for the Second Self,

which of course is the famous heterosexual crossdressers organization started by Virginia Prince. The levels of obscurity are so vast and arcane that the average person would never know what Tri-Ess stood for simply from hearing the name.

The parallels don’t stop there. The focus for Tri-Ess was to emphasize that transvestites were just normal, heterosexual males who wished to express the “woman within”. Considering the dearth of trans organizations in the 1960s, it is highly likely that more than a few of these “normal” heterosexual males were actually transsexuals. From time to time Tri-Ess publications *Transvestia* and *Femme Mirror* published articles encouraging transvestites not to forget their “male side”. Other articles argued against sex reassignment surgery. While this advice was probably beneficial to some of Tri-Ess’s membership, nevertheless the frequency with which it appeared suggests that not all of the membership was so certain of its “normal” male heterosexual persona. Tri-Ess, under the guidance of Virginia Prince, also discouraged talk about sex, let alone bondage, sadism, masochism and fetishism. For Tri-Ess to convince people that transvestites were “normal” fellas, it was necessary to present a “normal” facade. (In presenting a “normal” facade, Tri-Ess was in fact being very much like mainstream society, which as we’ve discovered in subsequent years ain’t nearly so normal as it pretends to be.)

Although Virginia Prince started what was to become Tri-Ess around 1960, before the liberation movements of that decade, nevertheless trans groups were at least a decade or two behind their gay and lesbian colleagues. During the 1960s, gay and lesbian activists spurned the strategy of assimilation that their predecessors had advanced. In a demand-your-rights decade, this strategy seemed ineffectual, and indeed contemptible. Michael Brown of the Gay Liberation Front said, “The older groups are oriented toward getting accepted by the Establishment but what the Establishment has to offer is not worth my time.” Many young gays and lesbians considered the older gay activists to be “Uncle Toms”.

While this accusation is hardly fair and could be regarded as youthful intemperance, nevertheless

older gay activists often did not see that the times were indeed "a changin'". Not everyone was happy that gays and lesbians fought back against the New York City police when they raided the Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969. One member of the Mattachine Society said that the sight "of screaming queens forming chorus lines and kicking went against everything that I wanted people to think about homosexuals...that we were a bunch of drag queens in the Village acting disorderly and tacky and cheap." This comment is also interesting in that it highlights the often difficult accommodation that trans people had within the gay community. (Considering how difficult it was to put the T in GLBT and the whining of some gays when they see a trannie in a gay pride parade, this uneasy accommodation continues for many gays and lesbians.)

As the voice for gay liberation became stronger, paradoxically the unity of the movement began to fracture. Many lesbians felt sexism within the gay community was not being addressed and split off to form their own groups to fight both sexism and homophobia. Similarly, gay people of colour formed their own organization to confront their dual oppressions of racism and homophobia. And in New York, Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, and others formed STAR (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries). Sylvia Rivera said: "The (gay) community is always embarrassed by the drag queens...but you've got to be who you are. Passing for straight is like a light skinned black woman or man passing for white. I refuse to pass."

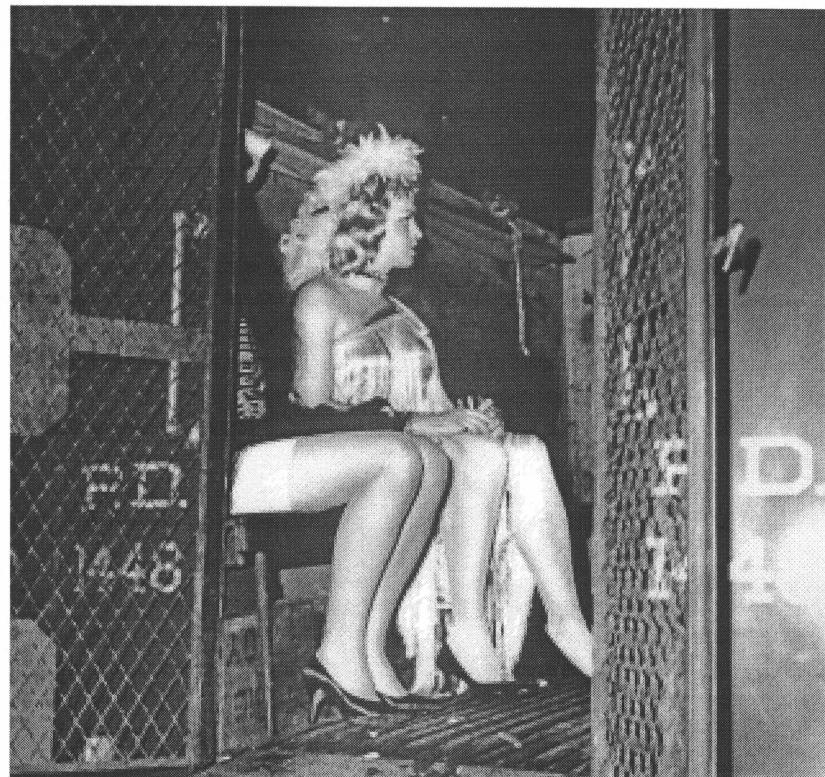
With this historical context, it's not so surprising that trans groups, usually a catch all of trans identities in the early years, would also split into more rigidly defined categories. And like the fractured gay groups of the 1970s, relations between trans organizations often haven't been friendly. While undoubtedly there are good reasons for the existence of separate groups for, say, heterosexual transvestites and transsexuals, nevertheless the coolness of one group for the other often exists because of this quaint pursuit for "normalcy".

Although the heterosexual transvestite is currently a beleaguered

member of the trans community, nevertheless his social standing as a usually married-male-with-children permits his claim to "normalcy" (a la Tri-Ess). His fear of transsexuals is that they are people who will likely freak out his wife.

Transsexuals, meanwhile, in claiming that they are "really" women and not "just" men in dresses, seek out the holy grail of normalcy: complete acceptance in society as the sex and gender that they feel they truly are. While this pursuit of legitimacy through appearing as "normal" as possible is understandable in the context of our current place in society, it is nevertheless a strategy that will only take you so far. Both the so-called normal heterosexual transvestite and the transsexual fear discovery and the revelation that they are not so "normal" as they pretend. There has to be an element of the "out and proud" trans person in the mainstream community or there is no social progress. Gay and lesbian history demonstrates this clearly.

This is not to say that the old education and assimilation strategies were as bankrupt as the activists of the 1960s and 70s supposed. Indeed, after the radicalism of those decades, which could not possibly be sustained, gay liberation evolved into a legal and reform movement that, but for being bolder, was in some ways not far removed from the earlier vision. It was only AIDS that radicalized gays once more, a not unnatural byproduct of watching your friends and lovers dying while the rest of society appears largely indifferent.



*New York, October 1962. Police often raided drag balls and charged participants with "masquerading". (From *Becoming Visible*, by Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman. Penguin Studio, 1998.)*

Having bypassed the radical 60s and 70s altogether, trans activism has moved in the direction of reform and legal rights. In this country, we have three examples that made national headlines. In British Columbia, Kimberly Nixon fought a controversial battle to be allowed to volunteer for a woman's shelter (see page 16). In Quebec, Micheline Montreuil is battling to have her name legally recognized without having to have a sex change; and Michelle Josef, former drummer for Prairie Oyster, is taking on the Ontario government for delisting sex change surgery from the province's medical plan. While it is encouraging when trans people win their court cases, the fact is gays and lesbians have lost many times and have still moved forward. It may seem trite, but engaging in the battle is, in the long term, as important as winning.

This is particularly so when one considers the number of times gays and lesbians have endured societal backlash. For example, gay social life in the United States was more diverse and visible in the early part of the twentieth century than it was in later decades. It was in fact its visibility and the Depression (which fostered an attitude that homosexuality was a symbol for the deterioration of society that inevitably brought on hard times) that caused the gay life to become closeted once more. It has hardly been a steady progression toward more rights. Even in the 1970s, after gays and lesbians had made significant gains, Anita Bryant (of Florida orange juice fame) started a campaign that scored significant successes in overturning gay rights legislation. In the spring of 1978 alone, gay ordinances were repealed in St. Paul, Minnesota; Wichita, Kansas; and Eugene, Oregon. Alarmed by these defeats, gay and lesbians rallied in November of that year to defeat California's Proposition 6, an initiative to ban gays and lesbians from teaching in the public school system and to prohibit any teacher or school employee from saying anything positive about homosexuals. Sadly, celebration of this victory was brief, as that same month openly gay San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk was murdered by Supervisor Dan White in what today we would consider a classic example of a hate crime. The road to gay and lesbian acceptance has hardly been an easy one, which might be a cautionary tale for all trans people.

Of course, our histories cannot be entirely similar. The trans life is more one of personal transformation than is the gay and lesbian life. While both homosexuality and transgenderism have been regarded as mental illnesses and the progress of their medicalization has been similar, gays and lesbians were unanimous in their support to remove homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders (DSM). The existence of



*Artist Reginald Marsh created a series of prints in 1929 depicting same sex couples dancing together, although the gender of the couple above is left deliberately ambiguous. (From *Becoming Visible*, Penguin Studio, 1998.)*

transsexuality in the DSM has implications for treatment, however, and causes us to be complicit with a diagnosis that is hardly self-affirming.

The personal nature of transgenderism and our immature quest for "normalcy" are also responsible for the relative lack of vitality within the trans community. While we have been at the organizational stage for about two decades, we still lack the broad cultural, sporting and social institutions that gays and lesbians enjoy. From bars to bowling leagues to professional organizations for gay lawyers and lesbian doctors, gays and lesbians have countless opportunities to engage in a fully rounded life. Their cultural life in particular has had a significant effect on mainstream society and it is interesting to speculate how great an effect this in turn has had on increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians.

Unfortunately, in most cities one can't even find a trans bar or cafe, surely one of the most basic of social institutions. This is severely to our detriment, but I suspect we need to go further along the path we are travelling before we see the kind of diversity in our groups that gays and lesbians cur-

While it is encouraging when trans people win their court cases, the fact is gays and lesbians have lost many times and have still moved forward. It may seem trite to say it, but engaging in the battle is, in the long term, as important as winning.

rently enjoy.

For this reason alone, it is important for us not to discard the papers, publications and photos that have marked our journey thus far. If we are still not so visible in the broad strokes of society, we should take care to preserve the details of our existence. One of the more evocative remnants of lesbian history that I came across was a Daughters of Bilitis newsletter from 1959 called *Gab 'n Java*. It advertised a meeting that was taking place in a member's home, included instructions on how to get there and had on the agenda the discussion topic "Should Lesbians Wear Skirts?". What touched me most about it was how powerless and isolated they were from society and yet how brave and motivated they were to improve their lot in whatever way they could. It also reminded me of the fledgling trans discussion groups that I attended in the past that provided a little companionship and at least the sense that we were

doing something to improve our lives. From such modest beginnings great movements grow.

When I see an old photograph of a trans person that lived long ago, there is a poignancy to the photo that makes me wonder what that person's life was like. In fifty years time, the photos we have taken of our friends (and we do take a lot of photos!) will surely have the same effect on trannies of the future.

We should never underestimate the power of history to further our quest for dignity. While we fight the good fight to improve our own lives, we also leave a legacy for those trans people who follow us and who will likely face many of the same challenges. The accumulation of all the minor and major battles we fight, individually and in groups, forms the foundation upon which future generations will make their stand to change the world for trans people.



*Much of the research on gay and lesbian history for this article was taken from *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth Century America*, by Molly McGarry and Fred Wasserman (New York Public Library and Penguin Studio, 1998.)*

*Many American cities had prohibitions against crossdressing on the books until the 1960s. This trannie was nabbed in New York near Battery Park in 1941. Battery Park was a popular cruising area during the 1930s and 40s. (From *Becoming Visible*, Penguin Studio, 1998.)*

Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief Society

Transsexual woman Kimberly Nixon won her human rights case against a Vancouver rape crisis centre. It was a case that many wanted to see her lose.

By Teddy Michaels

In January, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal ruled that Kimberly Nixon was denied equal treatment under the *BC Human Rights Code* when she was prohibited from taking training to become a volunteer rape relief counsellor with the non-profit Vancouver Rape Relief Society. Rape Relief had argued that, as a transsexual woman, Ms. Nixon did not have a "life-long experience of being treated as female", which Rape Relief claimed was a bona fide occupational requirement of the position. Ms. Nixon was awarded \$7,500 for injury to dignity, the highest award a human rights tribunal has made to date in British Columbia.

From the beginning, Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief Society was one of those human rights disputes that attracted media attention. Columns by the *Toronto Star's* Michele Landsberg and former National Action Committee on the Status of Women chief Judy Rebick portrayed Ms. Nixon as the big bad transsexual who had the effrontery to challenge a helpless rape crisis centre. These opinions were tossed out as informed comment and were largely uncontested by the majority of the mainstream population. Indeed, the reaction was so typical that some trans people might have wished Ms. Nixon had picked her fight a little more prudently.

The truth of Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief Society, however, is in the 40 odd pages of well-reasoned argument that Tribunal Chair Heather McNaughton delivers in support of Ms. Nixon.

Rape Relief tried to have the complaint dismissed on technical grounds, but failing that insisted that "a life-long experience of being treated as female" was a bona fide occupational requirement and a bona fide and reasonable justification for excluding Ms. Nixon. The technical objections were that Rape Relief volunteers were not employees and that they are not receiving a service customarily available to the public, and that conse-

quently Rape Relief was not in breach of the *Human Rights Code*. These objections were dismissed after an extensive review of previous cases and an examination of Rape Relief's operations. The true worth of Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief, however, is in Chair McNaughton's astute rebuttal of Rape Relief's occupational requirement and her ability to see through Rape Relief's equivocations.

This case has the potential to be one of the seminal cases for transsexuals in Canada. The problem with being transsexual and transgendered is that our status in society is still uncertain. It is true that if you have the proper documents and are passable in your desired gender you can make a go of it; but this status is achieved largely by having others presume you were born female or born male. To achieve genuine status and rights, it is necessary to have a body of jurisprudence that becomes a precedent in subsequent cases in which our rights and our status are denied us. This is why this case is so important. In effect, Rape Relief and its lawyers were challenging Kimberly Nixon's legitimacy as a woman. And they lost.

In her decision, Chair McNaughton observes that there is no evidence that all non-transsexual women share the same common experience. Indeed, she cites the testimony of Judy Rebick, Rape Relief's own witness, that the life experience of various groups of women is different. "The Women's Movement dealt with that difference by creating caucuses within it to allow women with different commonalities to meet together in consciousness raising groups...." By contrast, Rape Relief did not make the "slightest gesture" to include Ms. Nixon in their training program. "They gave no thought as to how she could be accommodated and led no evidence to demonstrate that they made efforts toward her inclusion." This despite the fact that Ms. Nixon had experience serving as a counsellor with Battered Women's Support Serv-

ices (BWSS), where according to the testimony of her supervisor she performed her duties admirably.

According to Ms. McNaughton, Rape Relief "applied their stereotypical view that, despite her self-identification as a woman, and her legal status as one, she was not a woman so far as they were concerned. Rape Relief made an assumption about Ms. Nixon that was not based on any assessment of her individual capabilities or her life experience. They reached conclusions about her because she was a member of a defined group - transsexual women."

It is difficult to argue with this conclusion when faced with the manner in which Rape Relief and members of its collective regarded Kimberly Nixon. For example, employee Lee Lakeman repeatedly referred to Ms. Nixon as he. When asked to address Ms. Nixon as she, Ms. Lakeman replied, "I'm willing to do that. I do mind, of course, and you know that, but I will."

Chair McNaughton frequently used the evidence of Rape Relief's own witnesses to buttress her reasoning. Dr. Ingrid Pacey, a psychiatrist with an expertise in sexual assault and peer counselling, acknowledged that in some cases a "transgendered woman might be an effective and appropriate counsellor." During cross-examination by Ms. Nixon's attorney, Dr. Pacey also admitted that some women who sought out the services of Rape Relief may not feel comfortable talking with a lesbian about their experiences, since "the issues following an assault sometimes differ for heterosexual and lesbian women." Nevertheless, it was Rape Relief's policy to refuse to replace a counsellor at the request of a victim who was uncomfortable with the sexual orientation of her designated counsellor.

Rape Relief's last stand was to submit that they did not contravene the *Code* because they did not contravene the "sex" and "political belief" exemptions in section 41. However, Ms. McNaughton notes that Rape Relief did not have a "policy in place which would indicate that their primary purpose was the promotion of the interests of only those women who fit their political definition of what it means to be a woman. In fact, the evidence of the Rape Relief collective members was that they had provided, on at least two occasions, services to transsexual and transgender women."

It seems to me that this case is also very much about two separate views of the women's movement. One is the original, inclusive vision that many women still believe in, and the other is the separatist view of women only spaces. The former builds upon women's traditional strengths of cooperation and compassion, while the latter

In effect, Rape Relief and its lawyers were challenging Kimberly Nixon's legitimacy as a woman. And they lost.

depends largely on a political belief that sexism is the product of a patriarchal society based on male privilege and that women can never acquire full rights in such a society.

Kimberly Nixon agreed with Rape Relief's political views, but she was excluded anyway. Herein lies the problem with the exclusiveness of some women's organizations. Riki Anne Wilchins wrote about it in her book *Read My Lips*.

An interesting contradiction rears its ugly head at this point. Although we began with the best of intentions - forming a movement to liberate women - it seems that our founding gesture is to decide who can call herself one, and then barricade the gates to prevent the barbarians from invading. Is a liberatory struggle about keeping out the "wrong people," especially those who feel they ought to be in?

If so, then regardless of who is judged a woman, an even more troubling question arises: who gets to decide? Some of us must have already been legitimized as women in order to make this determination to begin with, authorizing us to judge the rest. In so doing, we're not just keeping the riffraff out; we're creating a hierarchy where "real women" are separated from the rest of the group.

Rape Relief lost because this kind of view is anathema to human rights, which by its very definition is about inclusiveness. Had they shown some compassion and a willingness to try to understand Ms. Nixon, and her unique experience as a woman, the outcome might have been different. Instead, they slammed the door in her face, and then claimed they had done her dignity no harm.

Congratulations to Kimberly Nixon, and to the B.C. Human Rights Commission for recognizing that this case was very much a case about human rights. The trans community, and transsexuals in particular, should be very glad Ms. Nixon had the strength of character to undertake a case that many people in mainstream society would have been happy to see her to lose.

The Sins of the Father

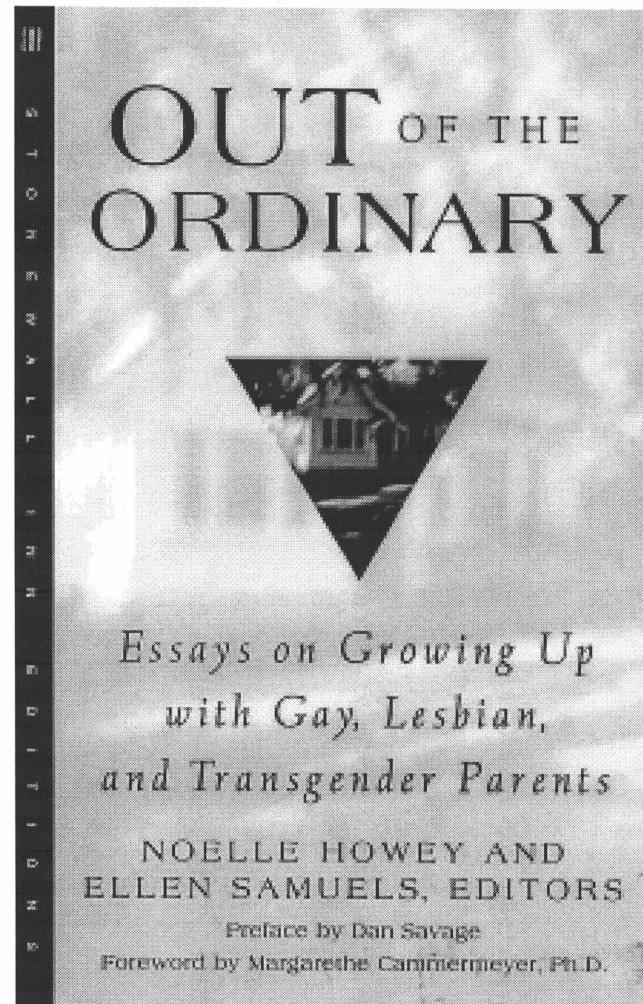
Out of the Ordinary: Essays on Growing Up with Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Parents, edited by Noelle Howey and Ellen Samuels. St. Martin's Press, ISBN 0-312-24489-4 (paper).

Reviewed by Alison Terry

This collection of essays written by children of gay, lesbian and trans parents often reads like a collection of short stories upon a similar theme. It's interesting reading because it demonstrates the diversity of queer families; and yet, despite this diversity, it is soon obvious that there are certain invariables in most if not all the stories. These invariables read like a list of symptoms passed on from their parents: secrecy, guilt, deception, feeling alone, and difficulty understanding their parents' identities. The children of transsexuals also speak often of loss and of a yearning for the way the parent used to be.

Unfortunately, knowing that these reactions are typical does not make them any easier to address. Each parent and each child has a different personality and how they resolve this issue of being different in a world with little sympathy for difference flows directly from the type of person they are. Not all the stories end up with happy endings, but the reason for that is not what one might expect. It's clear that how the parent views him or herself makes a significant difference upon the child. It strikes me as rather sad that, say, a trans person who is not strong enough to feel good about him or herself would pass this disease onto their children. "The sins of the father..." as the old saying goes.

Still, the emotional depth of some of these stories suggests that the child can rise above the unwelcome situation in which they find themselves. Stefan Lynch, who grew up with a lesbian mother and a gay father, was burdened by the fear of violence and rejection while growing up in Toronto in the early 1970s. His solution, like that of pretty well



all the children of queer parents, was to keep quiet about his family. And yet, "the years I've spent living with my very-closeted mother have taught me that the shame of the closet is much worse than the openness of my dad's life, even if the act of being honest made us vulnerable to violence." It's unfortunate that his mother couldn't embrace this lesson, but growing up in an even more repressive era she had internalized her oppression so deeply that it was no easy matter overcoming it. As one of the other contributors wrote about his lesbian mother, "her ability to provide emotional reassurance to me was limited."

Not all of the children were so sympathetic to their mothers' or fathers' plight. Laurie Cicotello, whose father Dana became a woman through surgery, punished her father for the changes she was putting her through. One of the innovations trans people have introduced to society is the pairing of pronouns with words that don't normally go together. The title of Laurie's story is *She'll Always Be My Daddy*.

In public we became adept at blowing pronouns. Today I still slip up sometimes and call Dana "he" or "him", but back then we did it on purpose, to show Dana that we still thought of her as a man, a husband, and a father, not this strange new woman who wore frilly, fancy sweatshirts and pink lipstick and who spoke in an artificial-sounding falsetto.

If Laurie sounds a little cruel, you might spare a little sympathy for her. When the entire family went to see a therapist, the therapist explained to her that her father was going through a form of puberty much like her own, "except that it was more important for his mental health than it was for mine." Insensitive stuff like that is bound to cause resentment. Some of the other advice the therapist gave them suggests perhaps she was a little underqualified for this type of therapy. She "believed that families shouldn't stay together when one partner comes out as transsexual" and yet not only did they stay together, they flourished. Laurie's story ends with the entire family up on the podium of the 1997 Denver PrideFest Rally, Dana holding her wife and Laurie by the hand, and "telling the cheering crowd: 'Colorado Springs, I've got your family values, right here.'"

Ultimately, despite the hard feelings and the resentment over their changed circumstances, the children with strong personalities prevail and learn to reconfigure their attachment to their mother or father. Since strength of character often comes with maturity, it is not surprising that adolescents often have the greatest difficulties adjusting. There is an essay by Morgan Green, fifteen year old daughter of trans activist James Green, that is superficially accepting of her dad's male identity, but which suggests a continuing unease with his life. (James Green was living in a lesbian relationship with Morgan's mother.)

I usually refuse to go to these events because, in all honesty, I'm really pretty bored with transsexual things. In addition, I often feel uncomfortable when my dad gets publicity because I don't feel like he is treated with enough respect from the media.... Dad seems to be proud of the articles written about him, or any transsexual for that matter, but I think most of them are sensationalistic, using his life for shock value. At times, I really can't understand why my dad is so obsessed with his own transsexuality.

Morgan's opinion of the media is undoubtedly correct, but that's the unfortunate lot of all trans people. Her greatest difficulty now, it seems, is that she has not yet overcome the thin skin so typical of adolescence.

Of the twenty-one essays, only five are about

Ultimately, despite the hard feelings and the resentment over their changed circumstances, the children with strong personalities prevail and learn to reconfigure their attachment to their mother or father.

having a trans parent. Nevertheless, it's a worthwhile collection for the trans library. One of the best essays, in fact, is *Smile and Say Nothing*, about having a lesbian mother. It captures with aching familiarity the isolation of growing up with a queer parent, the fear of violence and rejection, and the pervasiveness of the rule of gender conformity. Yet it is also filled with the wisdom gained from being an outsider.

But the constant awareness that the world outside was our enemy took its toll. My mother clearly suffered stress from keeping her identity secret. She could sometimes be harsh, cold, and impatient, as could Veronica, engaged in similar struggles. There's no way to prevent the anxiety of deception from seeping into a family's daily life.

As for me, I suffered knowing that I was considered somehow different and wrong, though I had done nothing to merit this. I became depressed, angry, and frustrated. I saw how other children seemed to live by the exclamation point - "Give me!" "I want!" - while I lived by the question mark - "Why don't people like me?" "What have I done?"

Out of the Ordinary was a 2001 finalist for the Lamda Literary Awards, Transgender Category. Considering that over eleven of the essays are about having a lesbian mother, this seems not just puzzling, but a little patronizing. Still, a trans parent trying to reach his or her children would be wise to put it on his or her reading list.

A Craving Made Morbid

Rachel Steen muses on how negative social views of transvestism encourage morbidity.

I think this is the story of most trannies. In my own case, I realized my crossdressing at around the age of 13, but it wasn't till I was 18 or so before I accidentally came across the word in the dictionary. Transvestite: a morbid craving to dress in the garments appropriate to members of the opposite sex.

This is from the Britannica, 1954. My teen-age years were the sixties, a time when the world was just starting to be aware of other lifestyles.

Although the world was, in some circles, becoming aware of crossdressing, the general feeling was one of revulsion, unfounded by any kind of rationality. Although more and more people are discovering a truer version of events, crossdressing can still be an experience of morbidity; that is, an unhealthy state of mind, marked by excessive gloominess.

How does this relate to me?

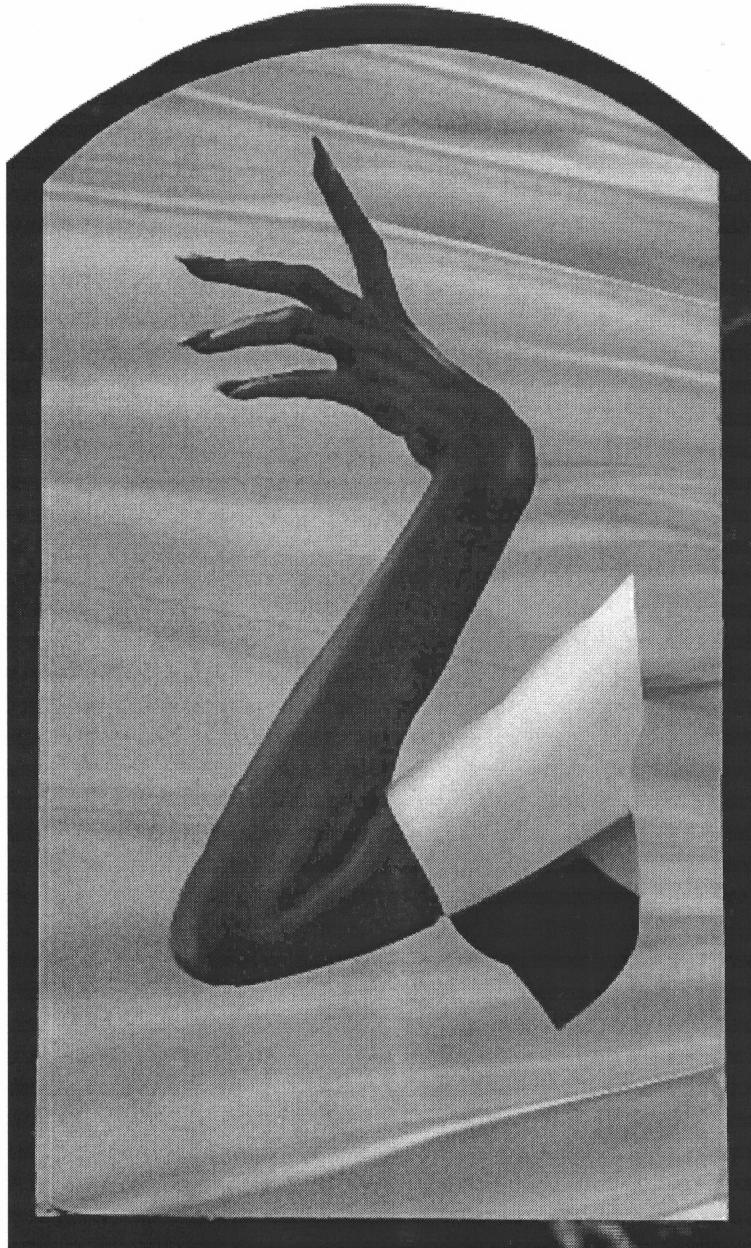
Well, I grew up in a world that was rigid in its roles for men and women, and my place was preordained. So my morbidity grew out of all that. The refrain, "Why me?" became a mantra to my all too impressionable teen-age self. I believed the bullshit that was floating around me, because I didn't have any alternate view coming into my life. It wasn't until the late seventies that my life started to change for the better, because I finally started to accept myself as I am.

There's no way I could convey to you how this "morbidity" affected me, but you probably have your own story to tell of that. We wind up being alone. No one to talk to. No one to understand. You become a freak. You get down on yourself; entertain thoughts of suicide. I don't pretend that this was the experience of everyone out there, but it sure was mine.

Solipsism is defined as the theory or belief that only knowledge of the self is possible and that, for each individual, the self itself is the only thing existent and that, therefore, reality is subjective. It seems that I was the freak I thought I was because I thought I was a freak. My reality may have been subjective, but it had been greatly influenced by the common view while I was growing up that transvestism was an "abnor-

mality".

We are social animals. We need communication, all of us, for a sense of belonging and a place to be. That's not to say that solitude is a bad thing. To be alone is to gather oneself. The bible says to love your enemy, but as far as I'm concerned, I'm my worst enemy because I permitted other people's ignorance to affect myself and plunge me into isolation.



Tara Taylor - Transwoman

Episode Five: Gender Panic

"What have I done?"

Sitting alone in the dingy welfare motel room that was her new home, Tara was experiencing grave doubts. Her denunciation of trans corrective surgery on national television had seemed like a good idea at the time. She'd had enough of being oppressed, but now she realized that one act of defiance hardly constituted liberation. What it meant was the loss of the comfortable home she had created with no apparent means of supporting herself.

After the trans underground's surprising publicity victory, David had herded her into the dark blue sedan where William waited, engine idling. The euphoria that followed as they raced down Wellington Street reminded Tara of the backstage camaraderie and enthusiasm among actors following a successful theatre performance. Even Kate had dropped her reserve and was looking at Tara with a mixture of amusement and admiration.

"Bloody good show, Tara," she said.

"It's all a pack of lies!" David shouted, repeating the stunning denunciation Tara had made to a roomful of reporters and government hacks expecting to hear a ringing endorsement of trans corrective surgery.

They made their escape along the Western Parkway. The

sun had dropped down through the clouds and was resting momentarily on the river's edge before sinking beneath the horizon. The trans underground had rented a safe house along the Carling Avenue strip from a swarthy chap who was more than happy to accept their money while simultaneously displaying a barely restrained loathing for trans people.

"Contemptible little man," Kate said, turning the key in the doorknob lock and giving the door a little push. "But money's a great equalizer. As long as we pay it, he keeps his mouth shut."

Kate noted a despondent look pass over Tara's face as she looked over her new home.

"It's only temporary. The ATS will be looking everywhere for you, for all of us, in fact. You have to lie low for a few days. Kim has stocked the fridge with goodies, and rented a few flicks. Girl movies," she added conspiratorially. "Are you going to be okay?"

"No problem," she said, trying to sound brave.

"Oh, and check the closet. Kim's done a little shopping for you there too. It's time you dumped that man thing altogether. You can probably get away with being Tara, as long as you experiment with different looks. Aside from the Anti Trans Squad, most people will still think of you as Tom Taylor, that little silk camisole notwithstanding."

Kate smiled. Tara had clearly risen in her estimation.

While Tara never had any doubts about her motivations, she was not so certain of her strength of character. The trans corrective surgery had not been a complete failure. She still longed at times to be "normal." Now, suddenly alone in the drafty motel room with the faded yellow walls, was one of those times.

"Normal, yes," she thought, "But a normal woman,

not a normal man!"

"Let's see what Kim bought."

Tara started with the bar fridge, which also acted as a peculiar kind of bedside table. It was stocked full of fresh veggies, dairy items, orange juice, even a few beers. A two-element hot plate sat atop a low set of curtained shelves. On the shelves was the dry stuffs: rice, pasta, some canned goods, tea, more than enough to keep her comfortably and deliciously fed for several days.

The closet was a masterwork of a few items going a long way. There was a pair of jeans, one black skirt, one navy blue dress with a tiny white floral print, one black cardigan, and several silk tanks and tops. One pair of black flats sat on the floor. Tara opened the drawer to the other bedside table, a real one this time though mostly cheap veneer and hardly a classic of the furniture maker's art. Inside were cotton and nylon panties, some socks, and one pair of black pantyhose. Sitting on top was a small bouquet of flowers, a little picker upper for which Tara was grateful. Kim obviously knew what she was doing.

She felt a little better, but still... What could a financially impoverished outlaw organization do against the limitless resources and power of the government?

In the days that followed, she watched from her hideaway as the media did what they do best. Tara's performance had thrown them into a frenzy of trans hysteria that was not entirely unfriendly. They demanded to know how a quack like Dr. Doright could have influenced government policy. And how much of the hard working taxpayers' money did such a policy cost? They rounded up contrary "experts" who debated from all corners of the country live on satellite TV the efficacy of the government's approach to trans people. "It was a disgrace," they all agreed, and when pressed they would only say that, had they been consulted, they would surely have told the government this policy was not a good policy.

In time all this might have

passed, but for the misstep of some of the more enthusiastic elements of the Anti Trans Squad. After a man-on-the-street interview in which a woman mockingly inquired of the reporter how he knew she was a "real" woman and not a trans woman, the ATS took her in for questioning and subjected her to a humiliating physical examination that shocked the country.

"This is war. We need to know who is in favour of traditional gender values and who isn't."

Gerry Rivers, the investigative reporter disliked for his overriding ambition, but whose sources were nevertheless impeccable, cornered Dirk Rednek and asked if he had anything to do with this outrage. Dirk was unapologetic. Gerry had an instinct for good television, and let Dirk wade in deep.

"This is war," said Dirk. "We need to know who is in favour of traditional gender values and who isn't. To do that properly, we need to evaluate all suspicious individuals."

"And how far are you prepared to go with that?" Gerry replied.

Dirk turned to the camera and his blue eyes turned a darker shade of steel.

"Just watch me!" he said.

Gerry then interviewed other men and women on camera. Masculine looking women and feminine looking men told stories of being abducted off the street and subjected to interrogation. Since their unpleasant experience at the hands of the Anti Trans Squad, all the traumatized women began wearing skirts and makeup again. All the men were growing beards. Ordinary people had become afflicted with gender panic!

As events unfolded, the government scrambled to regain control of their agenda. A new ministry for Gender Affairs was created and a promising, young Member of Parliament was promoted to head it up.

"This is precisely why we need a policy on trans people," Ms. Libby Parsons argued. Standing at the podium where just a week earlier Tara had denounced transgender corrective surgery, Ms. Parsons, smartly dressed in a woman's suit, complete with matching skirt and high heels, projected an air of competent femininity. "People need to be reassured that

How exhilarating it was to be a woman again!

a woman is a woman and a man is a man. Nevertheless, we wish to assure everyone that no men or women would be subject to the kinds of excesses that certain enthusiastic elements had recently perpetrated. These were isolated incidents. The majority of the Anti Trans Squad are caring professionals who only want what's best for trans people and society as a whole. Nevertheless, the government has relieved certain individuals of their duties and the Anti Trans Squad has been disbanded. Trans corrective surgeries have been suspended until we can guarantee the effectiveness of the procedure. A new program more in step with societal standards has been created. The Trans Integration Program will, through psychiatric intervention and continued improvements in medical procedures, work to make trans people a happy component of the male-female world we cherish as our natural God-given heritage."

With the government and anti-trans forces in disarray, the trans underground took advantage of the opportunity to move Tara out of the safe house and into a modest set of rooms above a storefront on Richmond Road.

"The flat opened up a week ago. The owner is a sympathizer," Kate said.

"Who's paying for it?" Tara asked.

"Don't worry about it. It's hardly the Ritz, and we're trying to get you something to do. In the meantime, have you thought about your new look?"

"I have just the thing!"

A few days later, the boy Tara finally reemerged as the true Tara. Her hair, now dyed red, was long enough to be cut into a bob. She wore the little black skirt and black silk top that Kim had bought her, along with the black flats, black stockings and a black beret. How exhilarating it was to be a woman again! How deluded she had been to think that she was anything but! She was determined to make her way in her new persona as a bohemian in black, and began frequenting the arts enclaves of the city.

"You've always been too much of a party girl," Kate said disapprovingly.

"That's not fair, Kate, and you know it. Why don't you come with me one night? There's this funky little cafe I've found on William Street that's safe and has a wonderful band that really cooks! You need to let your hair down a little."

A week later Kate and Tara went out on the town together. They had a light dinner at the Tulip Cafe, and enjoyed the house band until the wee hours.

"That was fun, Tara. I needed that," Kate said, as the two trans women stepped into the dark street. They had thought of phoning William to see if he was free to give them a lift home, but thought the better of it. It was late, and they didn't play the role of helpless women very well.

But as they walked down William Street, their shoes clicking on the pavement in the quiet of the night, they became aware of a figure looming behind them. As they went instinctively on alert, Dirk Rednek stepped up beside them. He lifted the odd looking homburg off his head, and with mock gentlemanly courtesy and a mirthless grin, he said, "Good evening, ladies!"

To be continued.



Collage by Rachel Steen