

phoenix

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Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another,
"What! You, too? I thought I was the only one."--C.S. Lewis

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THE DUAL LIVES OF MEN WHO DRESS AS WOMEN

by Karen [REDACTED] Staff Writer

From the April 10th, 1983 Hartford Courant
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For the Transvestite: Joy, Fear

The three people who sit in the small living room of this Hartford apartment introduce themselves as Debby, Veronica and Cindy.

Debby is the most of flamboyant of the trio, with a blonde bouffant hairdo, slinky, pink-striped dress and black-stockinged legs in spike heels. Veronica wears a low-cut sleeveless dress that reveals both cleavage and muscular biceps. By comparison Cindy looks like the girl next door in an Indian print blouse, flowered skirt and clogs.

But Cindy is the boy next door. He is a soft-spoken 26 year old Hartford man named Mark. Veronica was born Arthur. Debby's driver's license reads John. The three are transvestites.

Transvestism is the act of cross-dressing in which one sex wears the clothes of the other. The term, however, is almost always applied only to men who dress as women. Psychiatrists consider it a deviant psychosexual disorder among heterosexual men. To the transvestite himself, cross-dressing is more a way of expressing the feminine side of his personality more than a source of sexual pleasure. Neither the psychiatrist nor the transvestite understands the whys of transvestism.

Charles "Virginia" Prince, a biochemist, who started Transvestia magazine, says there are four million transvestites in the United States. It is impossible to say how many live in the Hartford area. Most cross-dress only in private, although some transvestites, such as Arthur and John occasionally go out in public, sometimes to gay bars where they are less likely to cause a stir. For some, succeeding in passing as a woman is their greatest challenge.

Virtually all must live a secret life to some extent. There is always the fear of rejection or harassment by an employer, a wife, a friend. For many there is little chance of finding someone who will understand or approve.

Canon Clinton Jones of Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford has been counseling

sexual minorities for nearly 20 years. He has a stack of index cards about 4 inches thick recording the cases of transvestites he has seen.

"The transvestite," Jones says, "is a mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics. He probably will live his whole life as a male. He often functions sexually as a male. He's 'John', but he's also 'Joan'. Often he has the compulsion to cross-dress because Joan can best be dealt with by crossdressing. How well they function varies a great deal."

Mark has struggled with transvestism much of his life. He has worked for four years in a suburban warehouse - a job that involves mostly physical labor. When he was 3 or 4 years old his mother dressed him as little girl as a form of punishment. At 6 he started dressing in his sister's clothes. When he was about 11 he began a pattern of periodic crossdressing that persisted for many years. After a miserable month or two of abstaining, he'd give in and then hate himself and feel guilty.

In the beginning, he says, he was sexually aroused by dressing in women's clothes, but not any longer. At first he thought he was homosexual, but now has decided he isn't.

When he was 21 he lived with a woman for two years. After three months he told her that he was a transvestite. She thought his crossdressing was a phase, he says, but when the relationship ended badly, she threatened to tell co-workers he was a transvestite. He became very angry and hostile.

Mark no longer wants to change, and more and more has come to accept his transvestism. Some of his friends know, and he has two female neighbors who are not offended when he crossdresses.

For a while he wanted to figure it out.

"I thought that if I understood it I could change it," he says. "I still don't understand."

Cindy appeared about 1½ years ago. As Mark got more in touch with the female

side of his nature, he wanted it to have a name. Cindy is happier and more understanding than Mark, he says. Mark gets outraged by things that Cindy can deal with.

Cindy wears her fair, curly hair the same way Mark does, or sometimes wears an auburn wig done in a simple pageboy. Her dress and make-up can be seen on any college campus. Her nails are polished a dusty rose.

Clothes and make-up come from mail order houses or from stores. Selecting clothing is more difficult if you can't try it on first. Sometimes a woman friend helps him shop.

Mark crossdresses three to four times a week - whenever he has the hour or more it takes to get ready. It is time-consuming and sometimes painful to shave his legs and sometimes his forearms and upper chest, to pluck his eyebrows and put on make-up. It is also very pleasurable, he says. The happiness of transforming himself to his feminine side comes over him like a wave, Mark says.

Mark is angry that he is expected to conform to other people's idea of accepted behavior. He says that if he goes a while without dressing as a woman he feels "not myself" - less at ease, more impatient, harder to get along with.

To Mark, Cindy is "just another side of myself."

◁▷

The cause of transvestism remains largely a mystery to the medical profession and to transvestites themselves.

Says Mark: "TVs do not fully understand why they feel the intense desire to dress in feminine clothing. They only know, for them, it is an important aspect of being a whole person."

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association, the official source-book for psychiatrists, classifies transvestism as a perversion - a psychosexual disorder with strong fetishistic overtones. Transvestism is listed as a disorder in which "heterosexual males, often who maintain hyper-masculine characters and jobs, dress as women on a regular basis. The activity is sexual in aim, as an adjunct to masturbation or coitus."

Dr. John H. Felber, a psychiatrist who

serves on the screening panel of Mount Sinai's Gender Identity Clinic, says transvestism is "an expression of immature, non-integrated sexuality which is fixated at an early level." The cause, he says "is possibly biological."

While doctors have reported some success in using behavior modification techniques to eliminate the desire to cross-dress, neither Felber nor Jones feels it is a condition they would try to "cure".

"It shouldn't be treated at all, unless the transvestite feels anxious, or depressed or guilty about it."† Felber says.

"I can see no problem, there's nothing immoral in it." Jones says. "It's no sin. Sin is separation; what we do to hurt ourselves and separate ourselves from God.†"

"What we are dealing with is a variant." Jones says. "It is the same with all variants in Nature. Hermaphroditism is a variant. There are physical anomalies and there are also emotional anomalies. They are all children of God."

† Emphasis added - Editor.

◁▷

Many transvestites agree.

"Transvestites are not sick, psychologically disturbed or morally depraved." Mark says. "They dress to experience a sense of comfort, release from tension and inner peace."

"We're not perverts," says John, a bookish-looking 30 year old bachelor who holds a managerial position in a suburban construction firm. "We're harmless, not out to hurt anyone. We're not into sadism or anything. People lump all sexual abnormalities together and assume they're all mentally ill."

John's other side is Debby, a flashy seductive blonde who wears ankle bracelets and open-toed high heels. He describes himself as a bisexual who is probably a latent transsexual. "I'd probably be happier as a woman. If I was 10 years younger, I might consider it [surgery] more seriously."

For Arthur, 35, the manager of a store, crossdressing is the way "the feminine side of me is expressing itself. I think we all have both and I feel the need to express it."

Arthur is a tall, powerfully built man who has been married 10 years and is the father of two children. Veronica, his other

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side, is a dark-haired, sultry-type who has a taste to garter-belts and low-cut dresses.

"As Veronica I can put on a less threatening, less destructive character," Arthur says.

In some states, although not Connecticut, it is illegal for a man to appear in public dressed as a woman. Both Veronica and Debby like to go, and have gone, out in public in women's clothing.

"I like to feel accepted, without people staring at me, like I'm just a regular person," Veronica says. Debby thinks "just sitting around in a room" full of other TVs "is still hiding."

A transvestite's greatest fear is being misunderstood by others, especially close friends and family. Mark says "It isn't easy for us to reveal our transvestism to others."

<>

Because of their relative openness, Mark and his friends are atypical. The majority of transvestites are similar to a man Jones recalls counseling several years ago. He was an engineer with a degree from an Ivy League school who had been married for 25 years. He had three children and all the trappings of success - a lovely summer

place, two cars and a boat. Every Thursday was "Daddy's Night Home." He dressed as a woman and walked around his house, sometimes taking pictures of himself. No one knew. For him being a transvestite was no great problem.

Based on those he has counseled, Jones describes, a typical transvestite as a middle-class, married man with friends and position and who cross-dresses a few times a week. Most of these men aren't being treated for transvestism. Transvestites who seek treatment specifically for cross-dressing are those who have been found out - a man whose wife has threatened divorce unless he seeks counseling.

Felber says that the rare transvestite who seeks treatment is likely to find either a psychoanalytical approach aimed at understanding the causes of the behavior; a behavior modification method of treatment, or a course of therapy aimed at eliminating guilt. Felber favors the final category.

Felber thinks transvestites shouldn't be married because they are basically narcissistic and incapable of a mature relationship with another person. The transvestite is "endlessly in love with his own person, body and sex," he says. Jones, however, feels that a transvestite can have a happy marriage and constructive relationships.

DISTINCTIONS MADE AMONG CROSS-DRESSERS

Strictly speaking **all** men who dress as women are considered transvestites. But doctors distinguish between transvestites, transsexuals, drag queens and female impersonators:

- > A male transsexual feels he is really a woman trapped inside a man's body; he may take female hormones and eventually have surgery to change his sex. In contrast ^amost transvestites are heterosexual.

- > "Drag Queen" is the term usually applied to homosexual males who dress in women's clothes for their "camp value."^b

- > Female impersonators are entertainers who dress as women. They frequently are transsexuals.

There are other terms, many of them loosely applied. Transgenderess, for example refers to man who has chosen to live permanently as a woman but who has no desire to undergo sex change surgery.

[a. The inference seems to be that transsexuals are **not** heterosexual. We, the editorial staff of the Phoenix, must register our dismay at and protest the wording of this paragraph. While a minority of transsexuals (both pre- and post-ops) do have a preference for the lesbian life-style the majority **are** heterosexual in that their sexual preference is for a male. By present social standards and professional definition a female preferring male sexual partners is heterosexual. One **must** remember the male-to-female transsexual, while an apparent physical male is, in all actuality, a psychological **female**. And, even members of the Behavioral Science field tend to agree that if a TS thinks she is a female, then, for all practical purposes she **is** a female. The law does not disagree with this view -- for example, many States issue a motor vehicle operator's permit, pre-surgically to the MTF, indicating a female sex status.]

[b Editor's Comment: If "camp value" is defined as "dressing in feminine clothing to attract male sexual partners we will agree with this definition.].

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Virtually all published references to transvestism involve men, although there have been famous cases of women cross-dressers, such as George Sands, whose real name was Amandine Aurore Dupin. Yet, female transvestites are not considered a clinical entity, primarily, because women can step into masculine modes of dress with no risk.

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The most detailed information on transvestism comes from a 1972 study based on 504 responses to questionnaires sent to subscribers of Transvestia magazine by Charles Prince, a biochemist and transvestite who writes under the name Virginia Prince.

The study, which doesn't cover the vast majority of transvestites who don't subscribe to the magazine, found 89 percent exclusively heterosexual, 9 percent were bisexual and 1 percent exclusively homosexual. Twenty-six percent said they had had at least one homosexual episode.

In contrast, 5 percent to 10 percent of the general male population is thought to be exclusively homosexual, with 37 percent reporting at least 1 homosexual episode.

Prince found 78 percent had been married, 12 percent more than once. More than a third of the divorces involved transvestism, although only 20 percent of the wives knew their husbands were transvestites. Seventy-four percent of the man had fathered children.

Only 14 percent had ever considered sex change surgery. Five percent took female hormones.

Ninety-nine percent said they didn't want to stop cross-dressing, and 72 percent said they wanted to further develop female aspects of themselves. Yet, 69 percent had periodically gotten rid of their female clothing.

Seventy-eight percent felt that changing their clothing changes their personality. Half kept their transvestism secret. Only about one-third ever appear in public dressed as women.

ARE THERE REALLY FEMALE-TO-MALE TRANSVESTITES?? WHY? by Lou (A FTM)

I've heard that question often. In fact, professionals in the field of gender dysphoria (I prefer euphoria) argue that female-to-male transvestites don't exist! Their argument is that since "women have such a wide range of fashions available to them, they have no need to 'resort' to actual transvestism in order to satisfy their needs". Somehow that logic just doesn't cut the mustard with me.

Transvestism, I feel, is not a way of dealing with fashion. And I cannot accept the argument of some male-to-females who insist they crossdress for "comfort". Women's clothing is the extreme of discomfort. And female-to-male transvestites are not looking for comfort in men's clothes. Sure, we can wear man styled pantsuits, cut our hair in a short style, and wear argyle socks with our flats. But, is that really what transvestism is all about?

Why do people, in general, crossdress? I have to take issue with anyone who minimizes the sexual and fetishistic qualities of transvestism. Until relatively recently (and it is still true in many circles) it was **not** socially acceptable for a woman to admit any of her secret sexual desires. Women could not admit they wanted sex, enjoyed sex or that they masturbated. While it was **naughty** for boys to masturbate, girls simply **never** did such things! Our society is presently struggling to accept the fact that women **do** desire sex and find it as pleasurable as do men and society is **not** ready to hear there are women who are sexually stimulated by wearing men's jockey shorts! Male-to-female transvestites aren't even ready to accept **that** one! But, it's true. Maybe it's too hard for men to accept the fact that the male body and its trappings are sexy! **Yes, downright sexy!!** That solid, flat chest! Those starched white shirts! Those wing-tip shoes! **Yes, damned sexy!**

Another reason people crossdress is to take part in the social role reserved for and enjoyed by the opposite sex. "Experts" in gender dysphoria (I prefer euphoria) say MTF transvestites often dress to allow themselves to be pretty, vain, giggley,

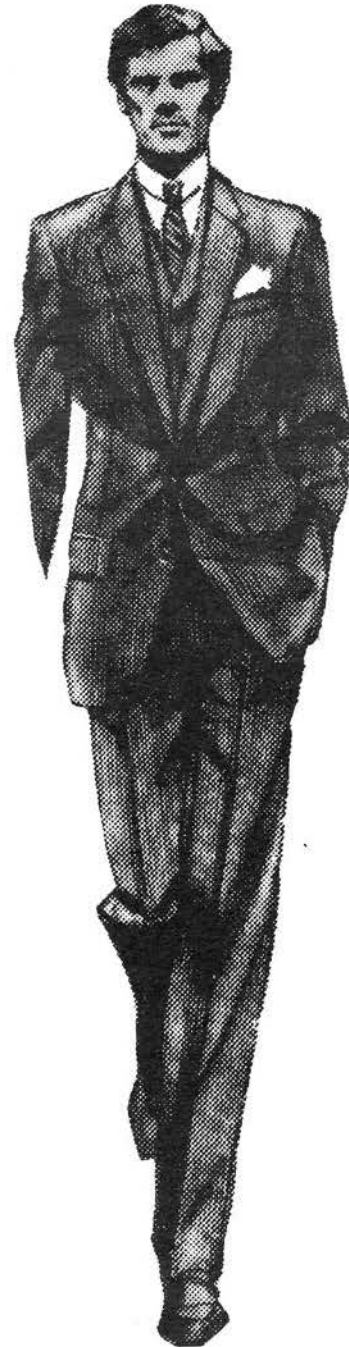
passive, nurturing, etc. while the FTM dresses to share in men's roles, i.e., to be strong, business-like, aggressive, protective, dominant, manly. While women's liberation has made many gains toward acceptance of "manly" women, being a butch woman feels a lot different than being a butch man.

How can you recognize a female-to-male transvestite? The occasional fetishistic transvestite, indistinguishable from anyone else, does her thing" totally in private. But, many are coming out of the closet, quite literally. Just as MTF transvestism goes beyond wearing a frilly shirt FTM transvestism goes beyond wearing a woman's man-styled pantsuit. There is no way you can be sure that a woman with short hair, wearing pants and a shirt, is a transvestite, any more than you can be sure a man with long fingernails is a transvestite. They're both saying something about themselves though, through their deviation from the norm. But, the MTF transvestite goes from long fingernails to blousy shirts to skirts and nylons; the FTM transvestite goes from short hair to blue jeans to men's dress slacks and ties. It's that total dressing and passing that distinguishes the "out of closet" transvestite from others deviating from Society's fashion dictates.

The FTM transvestite hoping to pass in public goes through great pains to dress as a man. We must learn to walk without moving our hips; bind our breasts so they don't show or move (just by that, you can hardly say we're dressing for comfort!); we must avoid all relaxed feminine mannerisms and we must lower our voice tone. All of this takes a lot of work—in some cases I'd venture to say it takes more work for a woman to pass as a man than vice versa. The MTF has the benefit of cosmetics to change and disguise his face. The FTM must avoid makeup all together and go out into the cold, cruel world cold turkey, her face plain as day. While the MTF can pluck his eyebrows, we must make ours thicker and bushier, without using makeup. (A mascara clump in a man's eyebrow is definitely a telltale sign of something.) Last, but surely not least, is the never ending challenge of our lack of sideburns and a beard shadow. Many of us have yet to find solutions to **these** challenges.

Yes, women are sexual beings and are

capable of sexual stimulation through the wearing of men's clothes. We have just been too guilt-ridden to talk about it with anyone else. Fortunately, as our society recognizes women's sexual validity female-to-males are becoming more comfortable in acknowledging their feelings and desires.



CORRESPONDANT'S DIRECTORY

Tired of posting all the adds and changes arriving in each monthly Supplement? Is your Directory a mess from all the posting? Can't find anyone to write to in the mish-mosh of X-ed out entries? Tell you what we're gonna do!

Effective February '84 we are going to publish a **complete** new Directory each quarter. We will continue to publish Supplements between each Basic Directory so all the new people will be added.

Because we will be publishing a **complete** new basic Directory every three months we will accept, but **not** publish, changes to your listing information between new Basics. If a change is submitted it will be included in the next Basic.

So, **now** is the time to submit a new listing for the Directory if you wish to change what is presently appearing for you.

Photographs will continue to be accepted but will **only** be published in a Basic edition.

Because these additional printings of the CD were "unplanned" we will use less expensive paper and reduce the print size to decrease the number of pages (but **not** the number of listings) and reduce the weight so it can be mailed at the same rate as your Phoenix.



TV WEEK-ENDS

A Joyce Dewhurst Week-end in the Poconos scheduled for May 18 - 20 '84. Contact Joyce Dewhurst, [REDACTED] Jackson Heights, NY 11373 for additional information.

Biloxi, MS April 25 - 29, '84.

Stallion Springs, CA June 21 - 24 '84.

Both of these events are sponsored by Shangri-La. Write Nancy [REDACTED] PO Box 18202, Irvine, CA 92713 for additional information.

THE MAIL MAN COMETH
(Letters from readers)

There is some information I would like you to supply. I am getting too many contrary opinions concerning who should do my surgery and who should not; the pain level involved and the "passability" of the final product.

Several years ago I met a post-op who had had her surgery at Bellvue in NYC. She said the pain was the worst she had ever experienced and lasted for "several weeks". Later she had to return to the hospital for a colostomy.

A few years later I met someone who had had her surgery at Johns Hopkins. She said she felt a "numbness all over" the first day as though she was in twilight sleep; the second day she felt stiff and sore in the crotch area and the third day the pain was unbearable. A week later the pain and discomfort "wore off".

Later I met a post-op who had had her surgery at Stanford. No pain, no discomfort and the work was so good most gynecologists cannot believe she's not a genetic female.

I have discussed my upcoming surgery with my therapist and she recommends either Dr. Biber or Dr. Wong (Galveston) saying they do "fantastic work." She also advised me there would be a "lot of pain, especially the third day."

Two weeks ago I visited a "session" with a local shrink and two of the people there told the group that Drs. Biber and Wong are "egotistical, money mad butchers who will tear up anyone getting surgery from them." If I'm going to pay my hard earned and saved money for this surgery I demand and expect a very high quality job.

Three days ago I met a post-op who had had her surgery by Dr. Wong and was told she experienced no pain or discomfort at all — contradicting my therapist. She also told me she was "packed in ice prior to surgery."

Could you give me some true and correct information concerning this surgery?

Ginny

Dear Ginny,

First let me say this. To my knowledge, and that comes from talking to sev-

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eral dozen post-ops, Biber is doing the best surgery today. I have yet to talk to anyone having had surgery at the Galveston facility, although I have been told the procedure is good and people are well satisfied with the product.

Now, about pain. Each of us has a different threshold of pain and each can endure more or less than someone else. But, I seriously doubt **anyone** can go through major surgery and feel neither pain nor discomfort during the recuperative period. I'm sure you know there are people who demand a local to have their teeth cleaned while others only require an anesthetic when having a tooth pulled. Some people can stand more pain than others — as a teenager I had an eye-tooth removed without an anesthetic — it wasn't my idea of a great way to pass a half an hour on a sunny afternoon, but then it didn't kill me either. I have gone over some of the back issues of the Phoenix and found that **each** article written by a post-op about her surgery mentions the presence of a good deal of pain and discomfort the third day.

Concerning the comment about Drs. Biber and Wong being "egotistical, money mad butchers ----". I suspect all meat cutters of their quality are more than a little egotistical, but I consider the remainder of the remark slander. If they are indeed "money mad" why does Biber limit his procedure to four per week? Why not four per day? The procedure only takes 3 to 4 hours so he could certainly do more than four per week. The same probably applied to Wong, although I don't know how many he does per day or per week, but I suspect his schedule is similar to Biber's. I have met both surgeons and certainly do not consider them anything but well qualified gentlemen and gentle men.

I know several dozen Biber Girls and have yet to meet a dissatisfied one and as I said earlier I have yet to meet a Wong Girl so I know nothing of his work. But if your therapist recommends him I would say that should be sufficient endorsement since she knows him, his work and some of his patients. By the way, did either Biber or Wong do the surgery on the two "people at the session" who made the remark or are they denied pre-ops voicing sour grapes?

We'd like to hear from all the post-ops reading this. Did you feel pain and/or dis-

comfort? When? How long did it last? Are you satisfied with the cosmetic appearance of the product? Do you have any complaints about the surgeon or his work?

Dear PM-I,

I appreciate the Phoenix and the organization greatly. The Phoenix never comes frequently enough and always ends too soon. I just recently realized that perhaps it is an avenue to learn more about a concern of mine.

Somehow the image of role models is important to me and in my struggle of personal acceptance of my crossdressing — it has become an issue with me. I love to see the pictures of smiling, proud members in the Directory. It is so much support.

My problem lies more in the area of not witnessing or realizing how crossdressing is or can be a growth factor in further development of a full and satisfying life. Presently my spirit is closer to personal evolvment despite my secret passion not through it. A distraction rather than a means for fulfillment. I play with the image of great people now and through history who indulged themselves in crossdressing and considered it important to them in the evolvment of their life's potential.

Are there any? Have there been? What did it give them?

I would appreciate reactions to these musings here in the PM-I.

Bonnie

Dear Bonnie,

Historically there are several famous crossdressers. D'Eon being one. George Sands, a female-to-male, being another. There are rumors, but no specific facts, concerning others such as Big Julie (Caesar) and certainly the infamous Nero.

As for "great people" currently alive, well, here again there are only rumors. Certainly nothing factual or it would have appeared in one of those super-market scandal sheets (at least).

We'll toss your hot potato question concerning what it has given people to our readers and we'll to publish responses in some future issue.

So, Readers, let's here from you on this one.

IT'S HAPPY BIRTHDAY TIME!



The following Associates have a Birthday in the months listed. We hope you'll send each Birthday Person a nice card. We have.

FEBRUARY

Justine	CA-15	Denise	CA-46
Vanessa	CA-61	Steven	CA-73
Alan	CA-83	Jayne	CA-118
Becky	CA-121	Jennifer	CA-143
Bonnie	CA-155	Shirley	CA-207
Monica	CA-217	Edwina	CN-25
Nancy	CT-24	Gwen	FL-23
Kim	IL-60	Karen	IN-10
Josephine	LA-14	Janice	LA-15
Nancy	LA-17	Arlene	NM-16
Marilyn	NY-12	Jackie	NY-52

MARCH

Stephanie	CA-26	Kaye	CA-97
Ashley	CA-219	Marilyn	CA-226
Mike	CA-407	Elizabeth	CN-15
Myrna	CN-18	Melaine	CN-21
Cindy	CT-23	Pat	FL-50
Diana	HI-10	Carol	IL-50
Anna	IL-57	Teri	IL-61
Bea	MD-33	Marcia	MN-16
Linda	NJ-21	Joseph	NJ-26
Jamie	OH-26	Denise	OH-31
Janice	OR-16	Tiffanie	TX-40
May	UT-11		

CARNIVAL IN HAITI
by Michelle (IL-58)

At the outset I should explain that I'm a Registered Nurse and work, periodically, as a Medical Missionary in underdeveloped countries and that is how I found myself in Haiti.

We had been extremely busy at the clinic in Haiti for the last two weeks because Carnival was starting and everything would be closed for five days. This Friday the Haitian doctor with whom I was working had seen about a hundred patients and, as I prepared the last few patients for examination, I started thinking about what the next few days would bring for me.

I had been working as a nurse and medical missionary in Haiti for about two months and, except for a few week-ends, had not been able to turn Michelle loose so she could be herself for a while. So, you can imagine the thoughts coursing through my mind as the last patient of the day and week waited patiently for me to fill her prescription.

My bags had been packed since Wednesday so all I had to do was take a quick shower and change clothes. Even though I made a point of not dress in the compound I was so keyed up that I couldn't resist slipping on a pair of light blue panties under my black stretch pants and dropping a black and white sleeveless shell over my head. I made one last check of my purse for my passport, travel card, driver's license and traveler's checks, picked up my suitcase and went out the door of my small flat.

About a month ago when I started planning this outing I had decided to allow Michelle to do as much of the traveling as possible, but I hadn't been quite certain just where she would appear. This problem resolved itself about a week later when one of the prostitutes from the Chez Toto in San Marc came in for treatment of a bad infection. I saw her everyday for treatments for almost two weeks and we became friends during her third visit. It was during that visit she looked closely at me, smiled and asked "Are you a woman?". I must have gotten a strange look on my face because she let out a little laugh. When I asked her what made

her think I was woman she replied that she had noticed I had no body hair, nice breasts, plucked eyebrows and nicely manicured and polished fingernails, so she assumed I **had** to be a woman. After thinking it over for a moment I decided to explain everything to her as she might be able to help Michelle. I found that telling her would prove more difficult than I originally thought since the word transsexual does not exist in Creole.

It was probably due more to her professional experience than to my ability to explain in a language lacking the proper words that allowed her catch on quickly to what I was trying to tell her. She was quite interested in the subject of my sexuality, asking all the usual questions.

After she left the clinic that day I got to thinking that perhaps she could think of some place where Michael could become Michelle when the long week-end finally arrived.

When I broached the subject to her the following day she offered, without hesitation, to let me change at her place. An offer I quickly accepted.

The walk up to the National Highway from the compound seemed longer than usual but, as luck would have it a Tap-tap (a little truck with a cover over the back and bench seats along the sides) arrived at the corner about the same time I did. The ride to San Marc was uneventful but the forty minutes it took to cover the twenty-five kilometers seemed to last forever.

The Tap-tap stopped at the south end of the town square, about a block away from the Chez Toto. By the time I covered the short distance my mind was running in high gear, and I really wasn't sure what to expect when I walked through the door as this was my first visit to a cat-house, and certainly it wasn't for the usual reasons.

Once inside I was greeted by the Madam, a short, very thin woman with a very pleasant voice asking me if I was the Blanc (white) Mari was expecting. When I told her I was, she led me down a long hall, across a courtyard and stopped in front of a weatherworn door which she opened for me to enter.

In the small room, about 10 feet square, were a bed, a small dresser and a single cane chair. Since there only a

single, bare bulb in the ceiling socket and no windows I wondered how I was going to do my make-up. Mari walked in, greeting me like a long lost sister and asking what I would like to do first. I said I'd like to have a hot bath if possible. She led me back to the hallway I had come through on the way to the little room. Opening a door she showed me a small, but clean bathroom. An old iron, claw-footed tub took up most of the space, leaving little for the ancient commode and lavatory. The size of the tub didn't matter, all I cared about was that they had indoor plumbing and, wonder of wonders, hot running water.

As I filled the tub I couldn't help but think of how long it had been since I had last been able to sit in a tub of hot water. I took some perfume out of my make-up case and poured about half the bottle's content into the tub. I must have spent at least half-an-hour soaking before even thinking about shaving my legs. Believe me, when you have lived under the primitive conditions I had for the past two months a hot bath is like dying and going to Heaven.

Finished with my bath I put on a clean pair of beige silk panties and matching bra. Then I put on my terry-cloth robe and walked back to the room where Mari was waiting for me. While I was gone she found a small desk lamp which, with the shade removed, supplied enough light to do a reasonably adequate make-up job.

Mari sat on the edge of the bed watching every move I made while putting my make-up on. She told me she'd never seen a man use make-up before. Since she was amazingly naive about some of the most common procedures she asked a lot of questions which I, of course, was happy to answer.

After finished putting my face together I took a yellow sundress, purchased in Petionville in January, out of my suitcase and after stepping into it adjusted the halter straps around my neck and smoothed the skirt. In the mirror I noticed how the yellow of the dress set off the dark tan I had spent so many hours on the beach acquiring.

I debated whether or not to wear a wig as they are rather hot, and decided I would look better with it. I asked Mari to put it on while I styled it. Then I transferred it to my head for the finishing

touches. A radiant Michelle looked back at me from the mirror. Cap Haitian look out. I thought, here comes Michelle.

After packing the clothing I'd worn to the "changing station" I took a new tube of lipstick from my make-up case and gave it to Mari. I thanked her for all her help and understanding, picked up my suitcase, slipped the strap of my purse over my arm, said good-bye to Mari and stepped out into the bright sunlight.

I walked back through the hallway, stopping for a minute in the foyer to thank the Madam and shows some of the girls sitting there the results of my cosmetic skills. They were so complimentary that by the time I said my good-byes and stepped out into the street my ego was ready for just about anything.

Looking down the street I saw the bus stop was vacant. It was a beautiful day with the temperature still in the high eighties even though it was late in day the sun felt warm on my face and bare shoulders. I decided that I might as well be comfortable while waiting for the bus so I crossed the street to a small bar/restaurant, taking a seat at one of the outdoor tables. The waiter, after taking my order for rum punch, asked if I would like something to eat. When I declined he left to get my drink. The rush of excitement of the last few hours had tired me more than I realized and I wasn't even aware the waiter had returned with my drink until he touched my arm.

The drink was cold and very good. I was thinking about ordering another when I noticed a small crowd gathering at the bus stop, so I knew the time to depart for Cap Haitian was drawing near. After taking the small hand mirror from my purse I checked my hair and make-up, added just a touch of lipstick, finished my drink and crossed to the bus stop.

By the time I reached the bus stop a group of thirty or so people were waiting for the bus. I spoke to a couple of women hawkers (peddlers) on their way home from market standing next to me. They were friendly and wanted to know where I'd come from, how long I'd lived in Haiti, whether or not I was married and asked many other "girl-type" questions. We must have chatted for ten minutes or so before the camion (bus) finally arrived. I was re-

lieved to see it was one of the new Mitsubishi units I'd seen traveling up and down the National Highway. In addition to being large and roomy it was also, thankfully, air conditioned so the ride would be reasonably comfortable. The driver was young and very nice. After some haggling we agreed on a fare of 30 gourdes (about 6 dollars). He loaded my suitcase into the storage area and I boarded the bus, located a seat next to a window and sat down. A few minutes later a Haitian gentleman about fifty years old seated himself next to me. We were exchanging pleasantries when the driver started the bus, and we were off.

By the time we'd gone 20 kilometers my seat-mate had become quite friendly and was telling me all about his family and about how he hoped to visit the United States someday. I was really sorry to see him leave the bus at a small village in the mountains, especially since no one shared the seat with me for the remainder of the journey to Cap Haitian. Because my mind was unoccupied by conversation it was able to concentrate on the treacherous road and the choufer's abilities. I couldn't help but think of the sensational headlines if something were to happen to me, but fortunately the trip was, as usual, uneventful. Dark had fallen by the time we arrived at Cap Haitian so I went directly to my hotel, a nice little place named Briez de Mar. While it isn't quite as nice as the American tourist places, it's about half the cost.

While checking-in the manager told me I still had time for dinner if I hurried a little. I went to my room, freshened up a bit and then went down to the veranda for dinner.

Try and imagine the scene as I walk out of my room and over to the stairway — the Atlantic Ocean is off to my right while below in the courtyard a calypso band is playing and to my left is the dining veranda. After walking down the stairs I seated myself at an empty table. To my left is couple speaking Parisian French, behind me is a group of four talking with New York accents, in front of me is a table where the six occupants are speaking German. To say that Michelle was in her element would be understating her feelings at that moment.

Dinner was served in typically European courses. After living on goat liver in Creole sauce and cold black bean soup I found it would not be too difficult to become spoiled in a hurry. I've had better meals in nicer surroundings but that night I felt the food was almost an act of charity.

Following dinner I adjourned to the patio where I found other women sitting and visiting. I made myself comfortable in a nice soft chair overlooking the ocean and spent the next three hours watching the ocean, drinking rum punch and thinking "Missionary life is Hell."

About midnight I went up to my room where I filled the tub with hot water, added a touch of perfume and proceeded to soak for at least an hour. I just couldn't help reflecting on the day's good fortunes. I had made an uneventful trip as Michelle; had taken not one, but **two** hot baths; had dinner to the accompaniment of the sounds of the Atlantic surf and a calypso band; and had had a meal served in a continental setting. What would the morrow bring?

Saturday morning the sun came up in a clear Caribbean sky. I awakened early and stepped out on the balcony to watch the fading blues and pinks of the sunrise change into daylight. On the street below Haitian women, with jars or water jugs on their heads, passed by on their way to and from the nearby public well. The freshness of the air matched my re-born spirit and I anxiously contemplated the day's coming activities.

Knowing it was only an hour until breakfast I started getting ready. I decided on a black sundress with a small red and green print shirred bodice brought from the States. Best of all, it was strapless. After putting on a black bra and black lace panties I decided against a slip because I knew the day was going to be hot. I slipped a pair of black leather sandals, purchased at the Iron Market in Port-au-Prince the week before, onto my feet; fixed my hair; did my make-up and headed down the stairs to the veranda for breakfast.

I noted that I was not the first to arrive as a gentleman I recognized, having met him during an earlier stay at the hotel, to be the owner of the hotel was

seated at a table for two finishing a demitasse of coffee. He looked up from his French language newspaper as I stepped on the veranda greeting me with a smile and a cheery "Bon jour Madame, aske ou gen bon demil?" I smiled, wished him a good morning, assured him that I had, indeed, had a nice rest and seated myself two tables from him. Having decided against a heavy meal I asked the waiter simply for orange juice and a pot of coffee. Now this may seem a harmless enough choice to order but Haitian coffee has a character all its own. The closest I can describe it is that it has the heavy body of French Roast and the aroma of a cheap cigar. Not only will an entire pot wake you up, it will grow hair on your chest — a prospect I didn't relish.

After finishing breakfast I returned to my room to finish putting myself together for the day. I slipped a swimsuit into my purse, checked to assure I had my papers and money and left the room, locking the door behind me. I dropped my key off at the desk and walked through the heavy iron doors into the street.

Although it was still early it was quite warm and I was wishing I could at least wear shorts rather than the sundress. But, since shorts are taboo for either men or women to wear on the street I was thankful that at least I didn't have to wear pants.

My first stop was at Carlo's to buy some postcards. I bought a Coke and seated myself at an outdoor table where, for the next hour or so, I dutifully made out the postcards while drinking another Coke in the process. By the time I'd finished the sun was fully up and my breasts were beginning to perspire inside my bra. Heading to the Post Office to mail the post cards I made a mental note to wear sundresses with a built-in bra in the future.

Because it was Carnival Week-end the hawkers were out in full force. In the three blocks I walked on the way to the Post Office I must have been approached at least twenty times by people offering everything from art to zebu statues. I grew so tired of saying "Pa jodi-a" (not today) I seriously considered printing a sign and hanging it around my neck. Anyway, I finally reached the Post Office, mailed my letters and cards and was off to the Iron

Market.

The Market even more crowded than usual, but I found what I was looking for — a woman selling straw hats and bags. I selected a large, floppy hat and a bag about the size of a grocery sack, but with handles. I also bought a new purse made from very thin bamboo strips woven together and lined with silk. After half an hour of haggling I was able to buy everything for about four dollars. Since it was getting late in the morning I decided to head for the Hotel Hon Joli and its delightful swimming pool. I stopped at some shops selling paintings and one specializing in wood carvings before heading up the hill to the hotel.

It was still too early for lunch when I arrived so I made my way to a pool-side cabana and changed into my white one-piece swimsuit with its short skirt. It's trimmed with a pink belt and has small pink flowers on the straps which tie behind the neck. I couldn't help but notice how the white of the suit set off my deep tan.

The water in the pool, although warm, felt very refreshing after a morning of walking around a dusty, smelly market place. I stretched out on one of the lounges and just let the hot Caribbean sun deepen my tan. The ice and snow of a winter locked mid-western U.S. seemed very far away.

As mid-day approached the pool area began to fill up. The mixture of languages was similar to that at my hotel the night before. A couple on their honeymoon occupied the lounges next to me. The woman stuck up a conversation with me telling me about her wedding and their home in Nicé. I loved her accent and wished that my French didn't sound so American. I also wished that I had her figure, but I supposed I had to be satisfied just to be able to pass let alone look like a woman half my age.

Finally, my stomach reminded me I had ignored it at breakfast, so I got off the lounge and walked to the where tables had been set-up under the dining canopy. I seated myself next to a table occupied by one of the most distinguished men I have ever seen. He was a few years older than I and his square shoulders and erect posture suggested the possibility of a military man. Although I wasn't looking for an affair, I

couldn't help but imagine what it would be like to dance the night away with someone like him. I noticed he had given me more than a casual glance when I seated myself so I decided to give him the opportunity to say hello by "accidentally" dropping my napkin. I almost lost my voice when reached over, picked it up and handed it back to me. I did manage a weak "Merci" and thought I was dreaming when he asked if he could join me.

His French was excellent, but spoken with a slight German accent, which I learned was due to his Austrian heritage. He told me his name was Karl and he was a trouble-shooter for the United Nations. Even though his English was also very good I preferred to stay with French as that language seemed more appropriate for the occasion. To say that I spent the most enjoyable lunch that I can remember is understating my feelings. I just don't think I could ever have had a fantasy this perfect.

Following lunch he joined me at pool-side and we spent the remainder of the afternoon talking about his work. He was an absolutely fascinating person and I could see how he gained his reputation with the U. N.

The afternoon passed very quickly and pleasurably. Before I knew it the sun was setting signaling that Carnival activities would start soon. I told Karl I should be getting back to my hotel and was pleasantly surprised when he suggested I dine with him that evening, an offer I readily accepted. I changed quickly into my sundress, brushed my hair and touched up my make-up. Karl was waiting when I stepped out of the shower room and offered to drive me back to my hotel. Since it was about an eight block walk I really appreciated the offer. We walked to the lot where his 450SE was parked. The trip back to the Briez De Mar took just a few minutes. As he dropped me off he reminded me he would be picking me up at eight.

When I picked up my key from the front desk I told the manager I would be dining out and went hurriedly to my room. I had a lot to do and little time in which to do it.

continued next month

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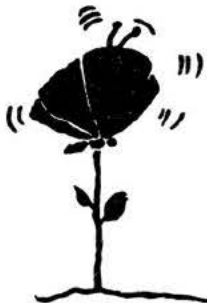
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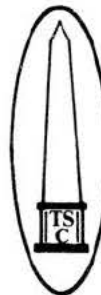
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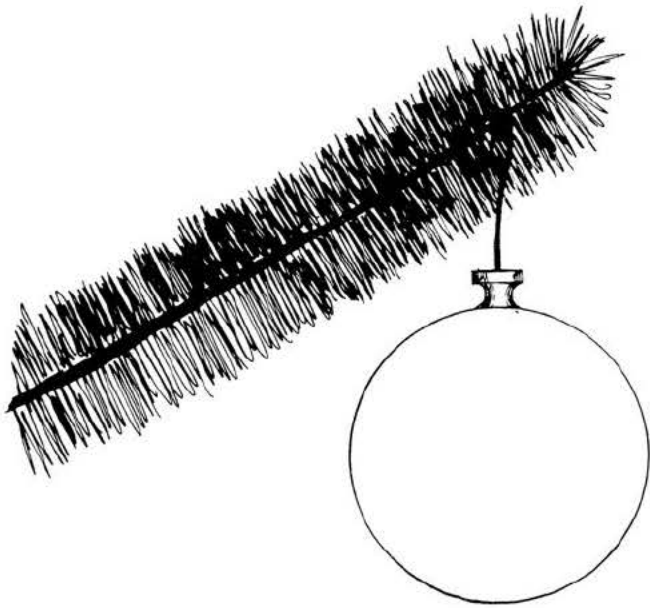
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