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November 1, 1987

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Dear Dr. Blanchard:

Thank you for your enthusiastic and lengthy letter of September 8, and forgive my delay in replying. I knew it would be an ominous task, but here it is.

First, please forgive me if I sounded too harsh in my last letter. I did not mean to admonish you; on the contrary, I am very grateful you mentioned the one female-to-male who identified as a gay man. Any slight insinuation of our existence, especially in reputable publications, warms my heart.

Naturally I was overwhelmed by all your questions, but will try to answer them in the order asked:

I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I cannot claim to have been a "tomboy" as a child. I was one of 6 children and played mainly with my older brother and 2 younger sisters. A favorite pasttime was what my sisters and I called "playing boys," in which we took boys' names, dressed as boys, mimicked a male voice and spent the entire day pretending we were boys. I realized early on that I enjoyed "playing boys" a lot more than my sisters did, and even did so when I was alone. No, I didn't have to be "forced" to wear dresses, but escaped into my fantasy world of "playing boys" even while dressed as a girl.

Did I ever believe or hope I'd turn into a male as I grew older? On the contrary--I hoped I would "turn into a female" and be like all the other girls. My mother promised this, telling me when I grew up, I would "blossom out."

Therefore, I was excited and happy when I began menstruating and growing breasts. This surely meant I was a normal female! But at the same time, during puberty, my first sexual fantasies were of a man hugging and caressing a boy, and thinking of men kissing each other--imagining a man and woman together was not erotic to me. I have kept a diary since 1964 (age 13) and, on reading back, I find early mention of my wish to be a boy and my interest in male homosexuals. I knew this was "wrong." At age 13 I had my first boyfriend for about 3 months--we broke up because he wanted to "pet" and I felt it was a "sin." Had another boyfriend when aged 15 for about a month, but he moved out of state, and I spent the

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next year "waiting for him." Even though I felt very attracted to these two boys and "loved" them, I could not relate to them sexually, and knew it was a "hang-up" for me. No, even to this day, I have never had a desire to pursue or "experiment sexually" with a female (although I did have one fun time with a post-op male-to-female...does that count?)

I have never been married or had any children. At 17 I formed a relationship with Jim, a boy 2 years older, and we spent 10 years together in an "open" relationship. He was quite effeminate (my father even "warned" me not to get too serious about Jim, as he felt Jim was homosexual--of course this only attracted me to him more!) We had intercourse when I was 18 and, while imagining I was another boy and he was penetrating me anally, I enjoyed it immensely. I always fantasized I was another boy when we were together sexually and was terrified he might find out my "perverse" thoughts. As we both feared pregnancy, we avoided intercourse our first 2 years together, but did any/everything else, until I finally went on The Pill. Jim was not a "breast" man: I usually kept an undershirt on, and he didn't object, especially as I felt no eroticism there. While I loved the sensations of receiving cunnilingus, imagining him performing thus turned me off so that I couldn't enjoy it. He usually brought me to orgasm manually and I pretended he was playing with my penis.

At age 22 I had to acknowledge that my desire to "play boys" and my fantasies of homosexual men were not going away. I began dressing full-time in men's clothes and met a male-to-female, who took me to the men's gay liberation meeting. I became quite active in the group, explaining to them that I felt I was a gay man. Although this was a new one on them, I was accepted, and for the first time in my life, I felt I had friends and "belonged." I still maintain my friendships with many of these men. Were gay men more amusing or sympathetic than straight men? Yes! and more attractive, caring, intelligent, and interesting. Gay men, I felt (and still do feel), love each other because they WANT to, not like straight men, who love women because they feel they HAVE to. Did I find straight men too dull or stodgy? Yes, and their attentions to women distasteful and pathetic.

What made gay men more sexually attractive than straight men? Simply the fact that they were aroused by other men. All kinds of gay men appeal(ed) to me romantically and sexually--old, young, leather and muscle types, lithe femmy queens, clean-cut men in business suits. If they loved men, I loved them!

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These were the David Bowie Glitter Boy years (1973+) and Jim experimented with make-up, jewelry, feminine clothing and male lovers. I passed as a boy and we went to the gay men's bars together. In 1975 we moved to San Francisco, and my mother gave me a man's pocket watch with the inscription, "Go West, Young Man." Jim introduced me to his new co-workers as his "boyfriend" but warned he would leave me if I pursued a sex-change. Though I applied to the Stanford Gender Clinic, I feared losing Jim and did not follow-up my application, which they never acknowledged. I began to feel "trapped" as a female in men's clothes (didn't even want to go to the grocery store for fear someone would think I was a female). For the first time I saw a mental health counselor and so decided to "try being a female again." I bought some women's clothes and from 1976-79 I switched back and forth--some days I'd wear men's clothes all day; some days I'd wear women's clothes, come home from work, change into men's clothes and go out to cruise the gay men's bars. I could pass and have sex without their discovering my anatomy by striking a deal that I would "do them" if they promised not to touch me. I became active in the transvestite peer support group, although I was only one of two female-to-males. I was probably at my most "feminine" stage when Jim left me for another woman anyway.

Free of his influence, I again applied to Donald Laub's clinic, being honest as before about my sexual preference, but was rejected on my application alone because I did not fit their guidelines requiring sexual interest in women. I pursued doctors in private practice and began testosterone in 1979, at age 28, and had a mastectomy the following year. My father lent the money to me, and my whole family was glad I'd finally made a decision, having seen my unhappiness all those years. I worked at the same job in San Francisco (from 1975-80) with full support of my employers throughout my transition. They asked me to continue working there after my change, but I preferred to move on, and they gave me references as a male. A month after my mastectomy, I began working full-time as a male at a job where no one knew me before.

Since beginning hormones I have never once had trouble passing as a male. For the first time I felt free to laugh and converse without fear of having a female voice betray me. I finally DID "blossom" - from a self-conscious, bitter female to a happy and friendly young man.

In 1981 I met my second long-term male lover, Tom, and we lived together 5 years. Our friends knew us as gay male lovers. He never knew me as a woman, although I still had female genitalia.

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Again, during vaginal intercourse, I just fantasized being anally penetrated instead. My father died in 1983 and I was able to seriously pursue genital surgery with my inheritance money. I again applied to Laub's clinic and was told that a female-to-gay male lifestyle was unheard of and they did not wish to be the first to deal with such a patient. They advised me to see Dr. Ira Pauly: "maybe" he'd write a paper on my condition and "maybe" read it at the next Harry Benjamin Symposium and, then "maybe" the gender profession would recognize my orientation as legitimate and "maybe" someone would consent to finish my surgical transition. Instead, I sought a plastic surgeon in private practice who had performed one "genitoplasty" previously, and in April 1986, I was his second. I have not had any internal female organs removed, as I preferred to spend my money instead on changing what was visible.

My relationship with Tom had been deteriorating the last two years and in December 1986 I left him, although we remain "friends." About 3 weeks after I moved out on him, I was diagnosed with pneumocystis pneumonia and AIDS. I have had sex with only about 20 different partners in my life (all gay or bisexual men), and with the majority of those I never even removed my clothes. I fellated them, or let them penetrate me anally while laying on my stomach and lowering my pants "just far enough" so they wouldn't see my genitals. Yes, it was always essential that they not discover my female anatomy.

Your questions about my sexuality post-genitoplasty are hard to answer. It took 3 attempts before my left testicular implant "took," and in March of this year my surgeon mercifully consented to finish the surgery. I am just beginning to healed up enough to present my new equipment to a potential lover, yet knowing I have this virus, I feel like a "Walking Germ" and stifled/afraid of "infecting" anyone else. I am trying to work through this with counselors, who know me only as "just another gay man" and nothing of my transsexual past. I joined a "jack-off club" where gay men meet to watch each other masturbate, and a contact club for men with small penises and those who like 'em small--I just say I'm a man with a micropenis and hypospadias. I fear my ultimate fantasy of having another guy fellate me, or penetrate me anally without knowing I was once a female, will never be realized. But I'll follow that dream, too.

No, I have never regretted changing my sex, even for a second, despite my AIDS diagnosis, and in some twisted way feel that my condition is proof that I really attained my goal of being a gay man--even to the finish, I am with my gay brothers. Since my

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remaining time is limited, I am concentrating on helping other female-to-males and especially in making sure the gender profession acknowledges that there ARE female-to-male gay men, and understands that gender orientation and sexual preference are separate phenomena. I don't want any others to be told, as I was, that there is no such thing or that they cannot live this way. To this goal, I met with Ira Pauly just last month and he videotaped our interview. He spoke of writing an article in general terms on the female-to-male gay man. I plan to see him again in January 1988 to speak in one of his classes.

I have enclosed several letters of reference from my doctors to substantiate the above. I do hope you contact Drs. Paul Walker, Eli Coleman, and Pauly, and feel certain they will all vouch for me. I have given my consent to Dr. Coleman to write a "case report" on me.

You asked where you might find the few references to the female-to-male gay man I found in the literature:

- in Leslie Lothstein's Female-to-Male Transsexualism (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pages 304-05
- in "Transsexuals: Looking for an Honest Reflection," The Advocate, October 6, 1976, page 16
- in Metamorphosis, ed. by Rupert Raj, Feb-Mar 1986, pg. 10-11
" " " Apr-May 1986, pg. 16

The first such mention I found in 1973, but lost it over the years, in a medical journal regarding a female-to-male who became pregnant by a male lover who thought he was penetrating "him" anally. I am a charter member and active in the San Francisco Gay Historical Society and have gathered information on over 100 female-to-males throughout history, including some who were attracted to men.

You noted a mention of the female-to-male gay man in Magnus Hirschfeld's Die Transvestiten. Was this book ever translated into English?? Please advise. How I've searched to find this work in translation in order to read these references!

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Thank you, Dr. Blanchard, for whatever you can do to educate those in your field on this subject. I hope this letter has been helpful. Please let me know.

Sincerely,

Louis G. Sullivan

cc w/o Encl.: Eli Coleman, PhD
Ira Pauly, PhD
Paul Walker, PhD

Enclosures:

- 1) Feb. 29, 1980, from Wardell B. Pomeroy, Ph.D.
- 2) Oct. 26, 1982, from George P. Fulmer, M.D.
- 3) Nov. 19, 1982, from Edward Falces, M.D.
- 4) Mar. 6, 1986, from Mary Ellen Sullivan Hanley
- 5) Mar. 9, 1986, from Kay J. Sullivan
- 6) Mar. 11, 1986, from Wardell B. Pomeroy, Ph.D.
acknowledging the homosexual female-to-male
- 7) Mar. 13, 1986, from Edward Falces, M.D.
- 8) Apr. 11, 1986, from Paul A. Walker, Ph.D.
- 9) Apr. 15, 1987, from Michael L. Brownstein, M.D.
- 10) Jan. 20, 1987, from Harry Hollander, M.D.