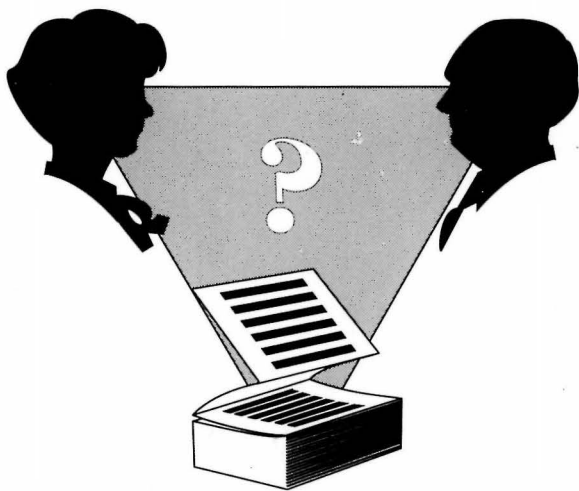


# Identity Management in Transsexualism



*A Practical Guide to  
Managing Identity on Paper*

by  
*Dallas Denny, M.A.*

**Identity Management  
in  
Transsexualism:  
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***Dallas Denny, M.A.***  
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## Author's Note

Many books and articles about transsexualism start with a disclaimer which reads something like this: "This book is for all transsexual people, but for sake of convenience, I've written as if for male-to-female transsexuals. Female-to-males can just turn the pronouns around."

I believe that just as it's possible to write in a non-sexist manner, it's possible to write in such a way that the needs of both male-to-female and female-to-male transsexual persons are equally addressed. I've attempted to avoid one-sided use of gender-specific pronouns and to give examples using female-to-male as well as male-to-female persons.

*Identity Management in Transsexualism* — the book you are holding in your hands — is about the legal changes which must happen in order for an individual who is publicly perceived to be a woman to become publicly perceived to be a man, and vice-versa. I will mention the concomitant physical changes, but only peripherally to the legal concerns upon which I will focus.

I will address the many social changes necessary to successfully change gender role in a future book to be published by Creative Design Services.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank JoAnn Roberts of Creative Design Services, who has been a source of good information for a number of years now, for publishing this book, and the Atlanta Gender Explorations Support Group, whose invitation to me to speak on this subject led me to realize that I had enough information to undertake this project.

I would like also to thank Sister Mary Elizabeth for her kind permission to draw upon her hard work, and for believing in me.

*For Sister Mary Elizabeth  
Who Has Done the Worry and the Work  
For Most of the Rest of Us*

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*Identity Management in Transsexualism*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**S**ex reassignment is a process of physical, social, and legal change whereby an individual transitions living day-to-day as a member of one gender and begins to live as a member of the other gender. This process is hardly instantaneous; typically, transsexual people go through years and sometimes decades of self-doubt and denial. This gives way to a period of exploration and increasing self-acceptance which for some results in the decision to pursue sex reassignment.

Even once this decision is made, identity does not change overnight. Only after a long period of therapy, medical treatment, and exploration does the individual begin to live full-time in the new gender role. And only after the individual has lived and functioned in the new gender role for an extended period of time is he or she eligible for sex reassignment surgery (SRS).

This book is about the legal changes you will need to make. Together, we will journey down the paper trail — the morass of legal and other documents which serve to identify you, and which must be rearranged in such a way that your former existence will not be accidentally revealed. I'll discuss, among other things, how to select a name, how to legally make it yours, how to change documents to reflect your new name and gender, and how to rearrange your employment, credit, and personal history so that your paperwork will not make your transsexualism readily apparent to others.

I certainly don't feel that my own sex reassignment is a shining example for others to follow, but I did successfully renegotiate my identity, and learned much in the process.

There were a number of circumstances (such as a name that seems to work equally well in both genders) which gave me valuable insights. In my own process, I was constantly amazed, both by how things I had overlooked could sud-

denly become important and by how problems that I thought were nearly insurmountable simply melted away. I will relate my own experiences and those of friends and acquaintances when appropriate (disguising their real names, of course). I'll not attempt to discuss every conceivable circumstances, but to give you examples of how I and others dealt creatively with our own situations in hopes that you will be able to be equally creative when your own time comes. The particulars of your own journey will doubtless be different.

Let me say that I am not an attorney. My training is in psychology and special education. I am writing from personal experience here, because I discovered the psychology and sociology of identity management is at least as important as the legal aspects. I have purposefully been rather general in my descriptions of legal processes. This is because laws, rules, regulations, and especially pricing structures vary. My purpose is not to provide you with a cookbook; rather, I have tried to give you enough information to cope with the bureaucracy, no matter how it is structured, and to deal creatively with the many roadblocks you are likely to encounter in your transition.

Let me just throw in here a plug for the forthcoming companion volume to this book. Life is about much more than paperwork. Certainly, in order to make the necessary changes to identify you in your new role, you must be skilled at dealing with bureaucracies and managing identity on paper, but life is lived interacting with other people. The transsexual person, when entering the real-life test, is thrown into the swimming pool to sink or swim, usually without the important skills one learns by being socialized in the new gender. You will be dealing in new ways with people at work, at church, and on the street, and you will probably want to be able to do so without revealing your transsexualism to them. Yet you may not have a great pool of experience upon which to draw. Your relationships, accomplishments, schooling, and skills may be somewhat atypical for someone of your present gender, leaving you unprepared for the variety of unexpected challenges that can arise. How do you explain a past which might include a degree from an all-male or all-female college, a marriage, and other experiences not usually associated with someone of your present gender? What do you say when someone asks you about your senior prom, or wants to know how you lost your virginity?

Such challenges can come out of the blue. When I began my real-life test, I immediately went to work in my new capacity. Nobody "knew." One of the first things I was asked was to bring in a baby picture; everyone else was showing theirs around. Where was mine? And recently my boyfriend, who knows of my transsexualism, was a bit shaken when he read the biographical note at the end of my master's thesis and saw me referred to with masculine pronouns. How should you manage such physical ties with your past, especially when you have people who don't "know"?

Volume II, *Managing Identity in Interpersonal Situations*, will discuss these and many other issues of post-transition living, including the tendency to go into denial of one's transsexualism — the disappearing act transsexual people have been famous for. I call it "The Closet at the End of the Rainbow."

And finally, the reader needs to know that traditional — if you can call something which arose only in 1953, with the public announcement of Christine Jorgensen's "sex change" traditional — notions of transsexualism are rapidly changing. Assimilation into society is no longer the goal of every transsexual person. More and more of us are staying out of "the closet at the end of the rainbow," owning our transsexualism, incorporating our transsexuality into our personal identities, just as we do our job titles. "I'm a teacher, a parent, a scholar, a transsexual." Once this is done, "passing" becomes unimportant.

The rest of this book discusses ways to help with assimilation, to blend into society as a member of your new gender, but if you do not desire to, you certainly don't have to. There's no rule which says you *must* assimilate, although some caregivers and even some gender programs seem to think that there is.

Dallas Denny, M.A.  
Atlanta, Georgia  
September, 1993

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## **SHADES OF GRAY**

**L**et me begin by stating emphatically that this is not a black-and-white world. Unfortunately, we in Western society impose upon the natural order of things an intellectual template, which comes to us honorably, by way of Aristotle and Descartes. We Americans tend to view things in a dualistic manner: black and white, night and day, man and woman. There is a certain utility to this view, but sometimes our dualistic patterns of thinking overshadow the subtleties with which this world abounds. The world itself is not black and white; thinking about it as black and white is simply a tool which lets us make some sense out of the (to use William James' term) "buzzing, blooming confusion" which surrounds us.

Dualistic thinking is perfectly illustrated by our conceptions of sex and gender. Historically, we have had two categories for sex: male and female, and two for gender: masculine and feminine. But there are people who are born with the physical characteristics of both sexes. No matter how ambiguous their genitalia or chromosomes are, however, and no matter if the forced choice often causes us to guess wrong, we must have either an "M" or an "F" for the birth certificate. There are no other designations currently available in Western culture.

But anthropologists tell us that many other cultures have more than two sexes, and more than two genders. For instance, the Navajo people carry a gene which results in a relatively high percentage of babies with ambiguous genitalia. These babies are called *nadle*, and are considered to be members of a third sex. They grow up with self-identities not as males and not as females, but as *nadle*. In other words, the Navajo have a third gender as well as a third sex. But Navajo without ambiguous genitalia can be *nadle*, as well. This gives us a fourth and fifth sex, and a fourth and fifth gender: female *nadle*

pretenders, and male nadle pretenders. All of these “additional” sexes and genders are considered by the Navajo to be as valid as we consider our two traditional sexes, female and male, and genders, feminine and masculine. Many other cultures have such alternate gender roles. Historically, there have always been people who felt inappropriate in their assigned gender role. Attempts were made to bring those who did not “fit” into either of the two accepted roles into harmony with society. Often, they were teased or persecuted, or, like Joan of Arc, murdered because they are unable or unwilling to conform to gender norms and stereotypes. And yet, despite social pressures, many men do not quite look or act like men, and many women do not quite look or act like women. Unfortunately, there are no alternative social roles available for them. Only recently have there been medical treatments available to alter them so they can “fit-in” as a member of the other sex. In fact, when such treatments did arise, a primary use was for intersexed persons to be physically like the other members of the sex to which they were assigned.

In our century, thanks in part to the work of John Money and his associates at the Johns Hopkins University in the 1950s, and thanks in part to the media sensation caused by the revelation of Christine Jorgensen’s sex reassignment in Copenhagen in the early 1950s, people who do not fit into one of the two gender roles have been presented with a rather drastic third option — to have their bodies modified so that they resemble, as closely as possible, those of the other sex, and to change their gender role to that usually associated with the other sex.

For some people, this process, which is called sex reassignment, is life-enabling, for by subjecting themselves to the expense, bother, upheaval, and pain involved in going through a long series of physical and social changes, they can achieve a social role which corresponds to their inner-sense of themselves. But for many others, this third alternative is as drastic as the traditional two. What about the people who don’t fit comfortably into male, female *or* transsexual roles? Must they make a choice that may not be right for them?

Fortunately, more and more people in Western society have begun to realize that there is a spectrum of gender options, and that the categories female and male are only two categories among many. A poor fit in the box labeled “Female” does not mean that one has to jump into the box labeled “Male” via the route called transsexualism. In fact, transsexualism can validly be considered a box of its own, for most people think of transsexual people as somehow different from “normal” females and males, no matter how convincing they look and no matter how long ago their operation. But there are many, many other options as well.

The result of all this progressive thinking is if an individual feels some discomfort in his or her assigned gender role, there are ways to stretch and ex-

plore that role in new and exciting ways; it need not be abandoned because it is not comfortable. Just as a tight shoe can be stretched, so can definitions of manhood and womanhood.

In fact, such definitions change markedly with time and place. Feminine dress and behavior in the 1990s are quite different than they were in the 1950s. Before World War II, a female in slacks was considered as scandalous as is a man in skirts today. Today, some women rarely, if ever, wear dresses, and yet they are considered within the feminine norm.

But, norms change, and it is people pushing against the rigid boundaries of gender which change our definitions of manhood and womanhood. Men need not all be like John Wayne, and women need not all be like Marilyn Monroe. Men can be like Alan Alda or even like Boy George, and women can be like Greta Garbo or even like k.d. lang, and still be considered men and women. There are organized groups which explore and constantly push back gender boundaries, such as the Pro-Feminist Men’s Movement and the Radical Faerie movement for men and the National Organization of Women for women. And there is a growing transgender movement in which men and women explore the other gender roles in various ways, stopping somewhere short of sex reassignment surgery.

Gender dysphoria is a condition in which the individual experiences feelings of inappropriateness in his or her assigned sex. Such people are obviously not happy with traditional notions of masculinity, if male, or with traditional notions of femininity, if female. This does not automatically mean that sex reassignment is indicated. Fleeing a stereotyped notion of manhood only to escape into a stereotyped notion of womanhood may not address the complexity of the actual person involved. All of us have masculine and feminine traits, and most of us can express them without resorting to sex reassignment or conforming to gender stereotypes. For some, the price of sex reassignment is very high, and the currency — loss of status, reduced income (and often perpetual unemployment), shattered relationships, alienation, and societal rejection — is far too much to pay.

That notwithstanding, for a few, manhood may be a better fit than womanhood, or vice-versa and the disruption caused by sex reassignment might be a justifiable price to pay. It is the route I myself took. I offer my support, by way of this book and its companion volume, to those of you who, after searching your hearts, have made the decision to follow this difficult course.

In the chapters which follow, I discuss the most extreme case, that of sex reassignment, in which not only physical characteristics are changed, but also the social context of the individual’s life. Those who are not headed for sex reassignment might nevertheless be able to glean some useful information from the text.



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## SEX REASSIGNMENT: WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Once the decision to pursue sex reassignment is made, a great deal of the individual's time, attention, energy, and money will be directed toward that goal. Few persons with gender dysphoria are lucky enough to naturally look like the other sex, and must pursue expensive, difficult to obtain medical procedures which can include electrolysis, hormonal therapy, breast augmentation or reduction, facial plastic surgery, hair replacement, tracheal shave (reduction of the Adam's apple), voice training, body sculpting (via exercise, dieting, and plastic surgery), and, for a few — perhaps 10 percent of those who start the fantastic voyage — genital reconstructive surgery.

Over a period of months and years, the physical characteristics of the other sex are approximated as closely as possible, given the limits of present medical technology. At some point, the individual undergoing this transition may generate some confusion at the grocery store, even when not crossdressed, for there will be characteristics which hint at both sexes. This ambiguity can be minimized by careful attention to hairstyles and clothing, but sooner or later, the balance will shift enough to allow full-time cross-living. Eventually, most will be able to achieve enough physical change to "pass" as a member of the opposite sex, at least most of the time. This "passing" will be the result of the emerging secondary sex characteristics rather than because of makeup, jewelry, wigs, or clothing.

The period of full-time cross-living is called the "real-life test" or RLT. The individual will live and work twenty-four hours a day in the new gender role — and this will occur not because of an elaborate two-hour crossdressing ritual but because the new body configuration won't allow it any other way.

It is at this point that the *real* sex reassignment occurs. Genitals, no matter

how important they may be to many transsexual people, are not something the world generally sees. Your face — now, that's a different story. Your face is hanging out there in the sun every day of your life, and if you were born male and have a beard because you neglected electrolysis, then you're in trouble if you're trying to cross-live. Reassignment surgery is a private experience, but being a woman or a man is a public experience. Everyone you see won't know whether you have a vagina or a penis; they'll judge you according to your appearance, and then make an assumption about your genitals. If you look like a man, they'll conclude you have a penis (even if you're meticulously crossdressed), and if you look like a woman, they'll assume you have a vagina. Your genitalia may be taken for granted, but the image you present to the public won't be. It is by your appearance that you will be judged and you will be assigned to one of the only two available sex choices: male or female.

Achieving a presentable image in the new role is not enough, however. Legal documentation, identification cards, work, school, and employment records, birth certificates, existing photographs, and other physical documents proclaim you, by virtue of your photo, name, and sex designation, to be of your original sex. These documents must be presented at critical times — when stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation, when opening a bank account, when applying for a job. And not only that, important people in your life expect — no, demand — that you be John Brown or Susan Jones. They either do not know about your sex reassignment, or they don't want to hear about it.

How can you bring about this profound shift of public perception and expectation? How does John Brown, a male, ever come to "be" Susie Brown? And how does Martha Smith "become" Matthew Jones? The answer to this, while certainly not simple, is straightforward: the building blocks of the old identity must be systematically replaced with the blocks of the new identity. The individual must methodically and carefully make changes to each and every element of the paper trail behind them.

Some of the changes will be easy. Some will be difficult, and will require a court order, or even a notarized statement by your surgeon that you are anatomically "correct." Some, unless you are an individual of amazing ingenuity or fortitude, may be impossible. The states of Tennessee and Ohio, for instance, have legislation forbidding the change of birth certificates for transsexual persons. But sometimes there are ways around such walls.

What I'm advocating here is civil disobedience, but a gentle, misdirecting sort of civil obedience, and one that is used only to negotiate obstacles that cannot otherwise be negotiated without wear and tear. As a veteran of this process myself, I discovered that the straightforward approach was not always the best. It attracted unwanted attention, it stigmatized me, it often resulted in stonewalling by bureaucrats with a personal problem with transsexualism.

And yet the same bureaucrats could be successfully finessed. I'll explain how and when this should be done, but let me say this: I am advocating misdirection, not fraud. Dazzle them with mirrors, baffle them with BS, but when it's time to tell the truth, tell the truth. Don't lie about who and what you are. Instead, be proud. If necessary, be an activist. But don't ever use forged or borrowed identification. Don't lie to a police officer about your status. Always carry identifying documents, and, if you have a therapist (and certainly you should), obtain a letter stating that you are required to crossdress in preparation for sex reassignment and carry it at all times. But if the total truth will cost you a job or cause you grief and a white lie will salvage the situation, then by all means, tell that white lie.

Civil disobedience may be too strong a term. I'm not suggesting that you chain yourself to the ROTC building, merely that you engage in some gentle misdirection when doing so will be to your benefit. As you continue to read, I think my approach will become clear. But for now, consider this: When I was in my teens, Abbie Hoffman wrote *Steal This Book!* It was a call to radical action, to disrupt the system, and the way to start was to steal the book. I didn't steal it. I didn't buy it, either. I read it, or at least enough of it to get its message, standing at the newsstand. I followed Abbie's call to action without putting myself into legal danger and without ripping off the merchant. Abbie was happy, I was happy, and the bookseller wasn't nearly as unhappy as if I had taken the book home under my sweater.

You can use similar tactics throughout your transition. Let me just say here that despite the various methods of misdirection and deception I advocate throughout this book, I am basically an honest person. I would return your wallet if I found it, and if you asked who had been in the cookie jar, I would 'fess up to it. Being transgendered in a society which does not accept transgendered persons forced me to learn to be sly at an early age. I firmly believe that without my little deceptions, I would not have flourished. You'll have to search your own heart to find your own boundaries, but keep in mind that you're not really hurting anyone or anything. You're just protecting yourself.

Appendix A gives an example letter which you can show your therapist. Have him or her copy it or write a similar letter. Ask him or her to write a similar letter and sign several copies. Keep one in your purse or wallet, a second in a secure place in your vehicle, and spare copies in a safe deposit box or in a locked file at home.

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## NAMES

**O**ur names are labels, convenient tags which others use to identify us and refer to us. Businesses and governments place our names in computers and keep us in their records. When we want to make transactions, we are asked to give our name. When others meet us, the first thing they want to know is our name. Our name is everywhere: written on the fly pages of old schoolbooks, on file in musty books at the courthouse, on our driver's license and other identifying documents, on the computer at the credit bureau, on our diplomas, on cards we receive at Christmas, on our birthday cake, on the top left corner of our checks, on our mailboxes. Our names are webs woven around us, defining who we are in society. They are constant, rarely changing except in the case of marriage, when wives sometimes take the surnames of their husbands.

In this culture, our names are "given" us by our parents. Even before our births, our mother and father give great consideration to what we will be called. They study baby books, listen to suggestions from friends and relatives, and eventually make a decision. They name us after relatives, movie or television stars, friends, historical figures, or themselves, or they pick a name they just happen to like. Usually, they pick a first name and a middle name, and give us their last name.

As soon as the name goes on the birth certificate, it is used as the primary method of identifying us. From the day of our birth to the day of our death, we will hear it many times a day. Throughout our lives, when our name is spoken, we will know exactly to whom it refers.

It is no wonder that our names are an important part of our identities. They are a measure of who we are, constant in an ever-changing world. When we tell others our name, we are as likely to say "I am..." as we are to say "My name

is..." Our names are that essential to our identity.

*(Editor's Note: In today's computer-oriented society, names are becoming less important as a means of identification. Federal law now requires everyone to register for a Social Security Number [SSN] and it is this nine digit number that is used most often as a means of identifying individuals. Names have too many variables, while the SSN is a fixed length and that is what makes it so attractive to computer programmers as a means of identification. An SSN is unique, while a name may not be. Just look in the phone book under Smith.)*

It is fortunate, then, that most people like their names, or at least are content with them. But for those with gender dysphoria, a name which is strongly associated with the gender role assigned at birth can be very distasteful to its possessor, who may have borne it unwillingly for decades. In the new gender, it may be jarringly discordant, a flag, strike one in the "three strikes and you're out" theory of transsexualism, in which an accumulation of discordant gender cues can lead others to realize that you are transsexual.

Most first and middle names identify us as either male or female. Certainly, popular notions of boys' and girls' names change with the times. Lindsay, Sean, Sam, and Chris were once considered masculine names, but are now perfectly acceptable names for girls and women. But other names remain highly sex-typed. There are few, if any, females named Fred or Bruce, or boys named Sue (How do you do!). Possession of such a name is distressing for the transgendered person, especially when he or she is in transition. It is usually necessary at some point to take a new name.

There is another reason why transgendered persons change their names, however. Many transsexual persons consider that they are starting a "new life" and use a name change as the embarkation point. They sometimes change not only the first and middle names, but the last name, which in our society is gender-neutral. A new name erases old baggage.

### Should You Change Your Name?

As your name is something you will have with you for a long time, it is important to give a great deal of consideration to what your new name will be, or even if you will change it at all. What's that, you ask? *If I change it?* Yes, if. Many names work equally well for both genders, and some, although predominantly associated with one gender, will not raise much interest if used by the other. Names like Ashley, Chris, Dana, Kim, and Leslie give us no clue about the gender of the possessor. On the other hand, we might assume that someone named Beverly or Carol would be a woman, but those of us from the deep South would not be surprised if a man in a business suit told us his name was Beverly or Carol. Traditionally masculine names like Michael and Sam have become increasingly popular as girls' names. While such names are still not

the norm, they would not be likely to cause much stir if used by a female.

Almost any masculine name is capable of being used as a woman's name. My dental hygienist is named Allen; the name usually causes some comment, but she wears it proudly.

Some names work well for both men and women. My middle name was Dallas, a name which I never considered to be gender-neutral until I was 40, when someone pointed out to me that they had known three females named Dallas, but no males. In fact, it's such an uncommon name that it really didn't have much gender history attached to it. Rumor has it that Dallas, Texas was named after a rancher's wife. There was a prostitute named Dallas in the John Ford movie *Stagecoach*, and a male pop singer named Dallas Frazier had some hits in the '50s (Workin' in the coal mine, goin' down, down down.). The captain of the Nostromo, the spaceship in Ridley Scott's movie *Alien*, was a man named Dallas. What are we batting here? .500?

If either your first or middle name is one of these "both-ways" names, or a "neither-way" name like mine, you have an option that others won't have. You can either change your name or you can keep it.

You may even be able to keep both your first and middle names. When I was in Belgium for my surgery, I met a transsexual woman from Alberta. Her birth name was Lonnie Dale. She had changed her names at the insistence of a Toronto gender program. If not for the "change the names or you're out of the program" coercion of her therapist, she told me, she would still be Lonnie Dale. Her companion, who was also transsexual, told me the same therapist had forced her to give up her job, which he considered "too masculine," in exchange for a career in nursing.

There is one disadvantage to keeping your name, and it is a considerable one. Names, as you recall, are used by society to label us. Your name will associate you with a past that you might wish to forget. And the association can come at inopportune times, in effect "outing" you. In my case, I have had such a boomerang experience only once in four years. Shortly after my transition and concurrent move to Atlanta, I joined a computer club and was promptly elected secretary/treasurer, even though I had only shown up to say, "Hi. I'd like to make contact with you guys if I have problems with my computer." The president of the club was Mark. About a year after I joined the club, on a trip home to Alabama, Mark mentioned my name to a friend from the Huntsville computer club. "Oh, yes," the friend said, "I know Dallas." But there was a slight problem, called to attention by their differing use of pronouns. The "Dallas" Mark knew was a woman, and the "Dallas" his friend knew was a man. A comparison of physical characteristics and personality traits led to the inevitable conclusion that they were talking about the same person, and there was only one explanation about what had happened.

I was fortunate: Mark was a perfect gentleman. He let me know in a very gentle way that he knew, but that it didn't matter. We didn't talk about it for over a year, and when we did, he told me that he had not even told his wife.

I'm very grateful to Mark. For most, it would have been a juicy bit of gossip which they would have been eager to share. And while my position in the club would probably not have been jeopardized, the way the other club members perceived me would have changed, as Mark did. When we finally spoke about the matter, he mentioned that sometimes when his teen-aged daughter looked at me, he wondered if she was wondering about me. She probably wasn't, but it was clear that Mark's knowledge had altered his perception of me. I had moved from "woman" to "transsexual."

No harm was done, but I don't kid myself. I know that at any time in the future I am subject to discovery because I have kept my name. And the risk is greater because of my high visibility in the transgender community. I might not be so lucky next time.

Despite the disadvantage of linking oneself with one's past, there are many advantages to keeping the old name. Especially if it is the one you were always called by, many of your identifying documents will be in that name and will not need to be changed. Nor will you have to go through your personal possessions and paper and purge the old name.

I am a lover and collector of books. I shudder to think of the thousands of books with my name written or stamped inside the cover, and sometimes on assorted pages in the middle of the book. I can think of no suitable way in which they could have been altered without damaging them. Thank goodness, I didn't have to bother. Nor did I have to alter many of my identifying documents, for although Dallas was my middle name, it was the name by which I had always been called, and it was on every document except those in which I had been intimidated into giving my full name. Besides, I am as proud of who I was as I am proud of who I am now, and it was nice not to have to purge my name from my possessions. Keeping my name has been instrumental in allowing me to retain my past.

But there were advantages to keeping my name which went far beyond just saving trouble. The very continuity which was capable of exposing me worked in my favor in many ways. Most of the documentation I needed to establish myself as a female was already in place. I needed to change only those few things — my birth certificate, one of my college transcripts, my social security card, and my work ID — that listed my other name, which unfortunately was not androgynous. And dropping the name did not blatantly point out that I was transsexual.

All right, I'll tell you my other name. It was William. I *hated* it. I could change William Dallas Denny to Dallas Denny without explanation and cer-

tainly without indicating that I was in pursuit of sex reassignment.

If on the other hand I had changed my name from John to Jane, any bureaucrat with a two-digit IQ would know exactly what was up and might make a "sex change" notation somewhere in my file. An acquaintance of mine found out, when she bought a mobile home, that although the credit reporting agency had changed her name as she had requested, her credit report contained an A.K.A. (also known as) giving her old male name. It was enough to get her "clocked," as we say in the South, and in a situation where she would much rather her transsexualism have remained a secret.

Keeping the name Dallas made it easier to get my gender designation changed on various documents, as well. When I was addressed by creditors as Mr. Denny, I simply said, "Please correct your records to reflect that I am a female and wish to be addressed as Ms." The person I was talking to would decide that they had made an incorrect assumption based on my name and change the designation without further question. If my voice had not been passable, this might have been less likely to work.

Similarly, if I get mail or a telephone call to Mr. Denny, it can be explained in the same way. ("Guess they assumed I was a man. Ha, ha. Wouldn't that be a scream?") Seriously — even if I happen to be with a friend who doesn't "know," an attribution of maleness need not concern me, for it is only an example of someone making the wrong guess about my gender-neutral name. If my name were Laura or Roxanne and someone called me "mister," it would be considerably more difficult to explain. Keeping my name has provided a continuity that is well worth the risk of exposure.

When I changed my name, I simply told the judge that I had never liked my first name, that I had never used it, that it was a nuisance, and that I wanted to be rid of it. That was hardly a lie. I didn't tell him the real reason was because I was headed for sex reassignment. The little white lie of omission saved me embarrassment and probably saved the judge about 20 blood pressure points. If I had been going from an obviously masculine name to an obviously feminine one, I would have had no choice but to tell him what was up. Chances are it wouldn't have been that bad, but I've known instances in which judges — especially judges in rural areas like the one I was in — have refused to allow name changes for transsexual persons because they objected to what they were doing. I saved myself that risk.

If you have an androgynous name, you can, like me, simply drop the other name. Later, if you wish, you can add another name. That's what I thought I would do, but I doubt that I will ever bother. (*Editor's Note: You don't have to live in a rural area to run afoul of an ignorant judge. In Northern New Jersey a transsexual sued the court because a judge refused a name change. She won the case and a new name but not without a lot of publicity.*)

I might never have realized the name Dallas would have worked if someone hadn't clued me in. As well as it has worked (I get lots of compliments on it), I had never for one moment considered that it could be a woman's name. It just didn't occur to me. It wasn't until someone pointed out that they thought it worked fine as a name for a woman that I took it for a test drive. And do you know the first reaction I got? As I handed my charge card to a sales clerk at a department store, she said, "Dallas. That's a lovely name for a woman." That was it. I kept the name, and I have never regretted it.

Appendix B is a list of names which can work for both males and females.

### Your Last Name

You have the option of retaining your surname, or changing it. Keeping the same last name, like keeping the same first name, provides continuity, which generally works for the best, but which can work against you. You may wish to get rid of a name you never liked, or you may change it with great reluctance. Or you may decide to keep your last name; most transsexual people do.

I correspond with Brenda, a transsexual woman from Michigan. She had collapsed her fine Polish name of eleven letters into a shortened Americanized name with five letters. One day I asked her why she was changing the name. She thought about it, and in her next letter, her surname was restored. She wrote that she was proud of it, by golly, and was going to keep it. She said she hadn't considered not changing it, and thanked me for pointing out to her that she could keep it. I was simply passing on a favor.

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## CHOOSING YOUR NAME

**I**n this country, anyone can change their name, and it's legal unless they have fraudulent intent. Sex reassignment, fortunately, does not constitute fraud. All 50 states operate under Old English Common Law: your name is what you *say* it is, no matter how it is spelled. You may have read that the entertainer Prince recently changed his name to a combination of the symbol for male and female. He can do so, and still be call Prince.

JoAnn Roberts relayed to me a great story about a foreign man who came to America and wanted to change his name:

*So he goes before the judge. The judge says, "What is your new name?" "Fish," the man replies, "G-H-O-T-I." The judge asks, "How do you get 'fish' from 'G-H-O-T-I'?" "Well," the man says, in broken English, "The 'G-H' is pronounced like the 'G-H' in Laugh. The 'O' is pronounced like the 'O' in Women. And the 'ti' is pronounced like the 'ti' in every word that ends in 'tion'. So, G-H-O-T-I. Fish!"*

I'll soon be talking about how to change your name, but first let's consider what your name will be. We've already discussed the possibility of retaining the name you were given at birth. Perhaps, like me, you'll keep your first name. Perhaps like my friend Brenda and like Christine Jorgensen, you will keep your last name. Perhaps you'll choose an entirely new name, as did Renée Richards, née Richard Raskin.

It will pay to give careful consideration to your name. First, let me caution you against "drag-queen" or "drag-king" names. There is a very interesting publication called *Dragazine* published by someone calling herself Lois Commondenominator. One of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (an activist group in San Francisco) is called Sister Vicious Power-Hungry Bitch. Both

of these people assume perfectly normal male names when they are not deliberately being outrageous. You, on the other hand, will have your name twenty-four hours a day. Choose it wisely. Names like Latoucha La Flamme and Countess Anne and Johnny Rocket are not the sort of names most people have or would want to have anywhere off the disco floor. You should avoid such contrived and extravagant names.

You should also avoid names which are unusual for people of your age. The name Brandy might be appropriate if you are twenty-five years old, but there are few sixty-year olds with that name. Names wax and wane in popularity, and many of the names of today are very different from the names of the last century. Girls were once called Faith and Charity, and boys Orville and Jedediah, but those names are now as uncommon as Brooke and Shannon were then. It's not that you can't have an out-of-fashion name. You can, and wear it proudly, but you had best be prepared for the curiosity it will arouse. You might consult a baby book for names; one about as old as you are would be ideal, if you can locate one. You can also look through the phone book for names.

Perhaps you've had a name picked out for yourself since you were young; many transsexual people do. I know someone who told me she chose her name when she was three. But if you haven't already picked a name then you might consider choosing first and middle names with the same initials as your previous name. The advantage to doing this is that you will be able to put your initials on your identifying documents and thus be able to use them whether you are presenting as a man or as a woman. How handy! Initials have no gender. You can work all day, show your ID to the policeman who stops you on the way home, change clothes, and use the same ID when you go out dressed. This can be a lifesaver in the "in-between" stages of your transition.

Some people ask people to call them by their initials, and may even go so far as to officially change their name to their initials. Is J.T. a man or a woman? Only the Shadow knows. (To those of you too young to know who the Shadow is, you missed a wonderful era of radio mysteries.)

An advantage to using initials is that the change from John Thomas to J.T. does not send out "sex change alert" signals. Nor does a subsequent change from J.T. to Janice Tamara. The initials are the middle-stage in a two-step process. After you are firmly established in your new role, you can change the initials to your new name, again without sending out alert signals.

Some people choose androgynous names. They can use them no matter how they are presenting. Later, they can change them to more gender-typical names, if they wish, although some people don't bother. Transgenderists, who may spent part of their time as a woman, and part as a man, might well consider selecting such a name. The choice of a name is yours, and yours alone. But you're the one who will have to live with it, so choose well.

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## CHANGING YOUR NAME

**N**ow that you have chosen a new name, you must change it. In every state this is as simple as using it exclusively. Under Old English Common Law, you can take any name you wish, so long as you do not use any other name to refer to yourself. This is a valid and binding form of name change. Unfortunately, many people and organizations will want to see your new name in writing and will not respect a name change without a court order to back it up. For this reason, it is important that you seek and obtain a court ordered name change.

Procedures for name change vary from state to state, but there are always attorneys who do this sort of work. Women who have divorced their husbands, adopted children, and sometimes people who simply don't like their names can all find themselves before the judge, so name changes happen often enough that most attorneys will know what to do. If you have the money, you should be able to find an attorney to do the paperwork for you. You'll still have to appear before the judge, but the attorney will handle the details for you. For this service, you will pay considerably more than the actual fees involved in changing your name. And if you pick an attorney out of the blue, he or she may be aghast when you tell them the name you have selected and why you want to change it. For this reason, and to save money, many transsexual people do their own paperwork.

I do suggest that you be honest with your lawyer, if you use one; however, if your name change doesn't indicate that you are changing your gender, you should use your judgment about disclosing that information.

Whether you use a lawyer is up to you, but if you can afford it, you should consider it. Your attorney will do most of the leg work, all of the research, and all of the problem solving — and not just for name changes. You can use an

attorney to approach your employer, state licensing boards, and other agencies on your behalf when you wish to change your name or sex designation. This may achieve better results than if you did it yourself.

In the courtroom, the judge will ask you if you have any fraudulent intent in changing your name; you must answer no. If your name change signals to the judge that you are changing your gender, he or she may have additional questions, and he or she may refuse your petition, or may ask for additional evidence. Some judges, like two-year olds, feel they can do almost anything they wish, and unfortunately, they usually can.

Don't argue with the judge if your name change is not approved. Simply find another judge, go over the present judge's head, or go to another jurisdiction, establish residence, and file there. I'll discuss this again later.

In many areas, you will have to publish the facts of your name change, generally in a newspaper of limited circulation. The court will tell you where and how to publish. There is almost always a fee for this. Your attorney should handle this for you. If you don't have an attorney, the court clerk should be able to help you.

The name change will not be official for a short period (usually 30 days) while it runs in the paper. When it becomes final, it would be a good idea to pick up ten or twelve official copies of your order; they have clout in persuading reluctant parties to change your name on various documents.

Some people include information about their sex reassignment in the name change order, but it is not essential to do so. You can always go back to court if you need additional documentation, and the additional notation is a definite flag to anyone who sees the order. There is an advantage to having such a notation, however. If your name change tells the judge what you're doing anyway, you might go ahead and add a sentence directing all parties to change records to indicate the new sex after the sex reassignment is complete. This is a back-door way to getting that "F" turned into an "M" or vice-versa. Many bureaucrats, seeing such a directive on a court order will comply, and many judges won't object to the addition. If your judge does, then simply strike the sentence. You might have two copies ready, one with and one without the sentence. If the judge refuses to sign the first, produce the second.

Many people do their own paperwork, saving the attorney's fees. A working knowledge of the legal system is a definite help, but if you pick the brains of an attorney or someone else in your area who has done their own name change, and if you have access to a computer with a printer or a typewriter, you should be able to get by. Your informant may be able to supply you with the forms you will need. Failing this, sweet-talking the clerks in the appropriate office at the country courthouse may get you sample forms. If you are a member of a support group, you may be able to obtain forms there. Also, most

large cities have legal stationery stores where you can buy almost any form used in your state. Different states handle name changes in different courts, but if you inquire around the county court house, someone in a business suit should be able to tell you where to go.

Most likely, you will find yourself in the office of either the County Court Clerk or the Superior Court Clerk. You must file a petition for a name change, for which there is a fee. I filed my own name change in Tennessee; it cost sixty-five dollars. Previously, I had visited a local attorney to inquire about the cost. He wanted five hundred dollars.

The court fee will vary with location. It costs about a hundred and thirty dollars to change one's name in Georgia, and only about fifteen dollars in Alabama. There may be an additional fee for publication of the notice.

Appendix C contains samples of petitions to change names and of court orders for name changes. There is no guarantee they will work in your location, but they can serve as a rough guide.

## IMPLEMENTING YOUR NAME: I

**N**ow that you have changed your name, you have the formidable task of making yourself known by it. Of course, you can tell your new name to your friends and family, and they may even make some attempt to use it. But what of all the paperwork? What of the myriad documents with your name on them? You must have those documents changed, one by one, because you don't want anyone doing a routine employment or credit check to stumble across information which reveals you had sex reassignment.

Historically, there has been little chance that you will have your birth certificate reissued or amended without an affidavit from your surgeon that you have actually had genital surgery — if you are lucky enough to live in a state which amends old certificates or issues new ones. But times, they are a'changin.' Transgendered people are working on a number of fronts to convince state governments that the appropriate criterion for a "M" or "F" on documents is not one's genitals, but the circumstances of one's life. In Texas, California, and a few other states, one can now legally be identified as Male or Female without having genital surgery.

Nevertheless, most states still require documentation of surgical sex reassignment before they will alter records. If you live in one of the states that will change your sex designation to match your gender role without proof of surgery, you can change everything at once. If not, take notes as you change your name; you'll need to go through the procedure again if you have surgery.

It pays to be thorough. The brick-wall approach works best: you must make the changes, one brick at a time, just as if you were laying a wall. You must individually contact credit bureaus, banks, libraries, schools, creditors, the Social Security Administration, and other agencies and ask them to change

their records to reflect your new name. Most will comply without hesitation, but some may require persuasion. Others may simply refuse. You should inform them that you have a court order for name change, and that they are required to obey it. In all but the rarest instances, that should work.

In actuality, many places will change your name on request. The Social Security Administration will issue a card in whatever name you like; however their files will still have your real name. You'll need a court order before they will change it in their records. Credit card companies will issue you duplicate cards in whichever name you wish, and many other agencies will change your name on request. But if someone says, "No," it's time to use that court order.

Until you have sex reassignment surgery (if that is your goal), your identification will probably say you are a member of the sex you were assigned at birth. Even if it shows a picture of the new-you given you by hormones and your new name, it will still reveal your birth-sex. Why, then, bother with changing your name on your identifying documents? Why not wait and do everything at once?

One reason has already been mentioned. What if you are among the 95% who never have surgery? What if you are too frightened to go under the knife? What if you have health problems which preclude surgery? What if you just never manage to save the money? You don't want to be stuck with a picture showing you as a member of one sex and a name which suggests just the opposite. It's even worse if you don't update your photo to reflect your new appearance. What is the poor girl in the checkout line at the Supermarket supposed to do? "Excuse me, miss, but is this your husband's ID? Don't you have a driver's license of your own?"

Getting your identification as close as possible to the ideal will in most instances effectively identify you in your new role. Otherwise, as you become less like the man or women on your driver's license, your identification may be questioned. Much to my delight, I found that a photo in my new androgynous appearance (the photo was taken in my last days in the old role) was quite sufficient for people to judge me female upon glancing at my driver's license — and remember, my name did not give me away. Quite simply, the photo and name got the attention of everyone who looked at the license, and no one at all looked at the little "M" in the box marked Sex. I was able to cash checks and do anything I wanted, using my ID, and the "M" was no handicap.

You may have a similar experience, especially if you "lose" your driver's license on occasion (hint, hint). Your replacement license will have a new photo and that photo will reflect the changes in your appearance. In fact, I imagine that it wouldn't even be necessary to say you lost your license. If you were to go to the examining station and say that your photo no longer looks like you, they would probably update it for you for a fee.



If you are lucky enough to look and sound like a member of your new gender, it is likely that you will be taken at face value. The Sex box is not something that anyone will pay particular attention to unless they sense something dissonant. If your voice, demeanor, or appearance sets off alert flags, the first thing clerks will do is look at your license more closely — and they will be specifically *looking* at the Sex box. Tick-tock! Clocked!

Another trick is to just leave the “Sex” box blank on the application. If you have a passable appearance, the clerk will likely assume you did not notice the box and check it off for you. It’s been known to work.

Even if your appearance is problematic, getting your photo and name in line with your current role is a good idea. You can then use your identification in conjunction with a letter from your therapist, stating that you are living in the new gender role. No matter how rough your appearance, most policemen and other officials will accept that you are required to cross-live.

Some support groups provide ID cards which identify you as transsexual or transgendered. These cards have no legal standing, but they can be amazingly effective when you are dealing with a policeman whose sole experience with transgendered persons has come from rousting prostitutes or seeing a female impersonator show. An identification card gives you an air of legitimacy and, if it tells the reader that you are to be respected and is suitably officious in appearance, and if you are conducting yourself with poise and are dressed in a manner which invites respect, chances are you will indeed be treated courteously — even while the officer is writing you a ticket.

It helps if a contact person’s name is listed on the ID card. This can be your therapist or someone from your support group. The more official-looking card, the more effective it will be. I’ve seen some very handsome cards with “before” and “after” photos. You needn’t go overboard, but be sure the card doesn’t look as if you cooked it up yourself — even if you did!

Appendix D gives an example of such an identification card. You can remove the card and fill it out, seal it in plastic, and keep it next to your driver’s license in the event that you need it. Remember, however, that the card has *no legal standing*.

You should sit down with a clear mind and a pencil and list as many places as possible that have your records. Elementary and high schools, colleges, the military, your dentist, your physician, hospitals, state agencies, your insurance agent, your stockbroker, your banker, your employer, your social club, magazine subscriptions, professional organizations, utility companies, the buying cooperative, your creditors, your health care professionals, and on and on. The list will vary from person to person, and only you will know exactly what needs to be changed. Keeping a list is important, for without it you’ll have only a haphazard notion of what you must do. If you’re systematic about it, you’ll be

amazed at the length of your list. If you don’t give the matter enough attention, the wall you will be building will be missing some bricks. This will weaken the wall, and may bring it tumbling down later, making it clear to those who have checked your paperwork that you had sex reassignment. And this will happen, following Murphy’s Law, at the worst possible time, preventing you from getting that job or loan you wanted so badly.

Appendix E gives some places which might have your records, but remember — your final list will be a personal one, undoubtedly including agencies and people I could not foresee on the list. You should contact each and every organization and individual on your list and inform them of your name change and ask them to change their records to reflect the facts. If they refuse, mention the court order and show it to them if they ask you. Send them an official copy if necessary; that’s why you paid for so many.

If they still refuse, you should politely thank them and ask the person’s name to whom you are speaking and then call back and ask to speak to a supervisor. Be polite but firm in your request, and let them know that you are willing to pursue the matter. Also consider that the response you get may be due solely to the bureaucrat who answered the phone or whose turn it was to see the next client. If you call back or make another visit, you may get another clerk, and this one may be cooperative and make the change without comment. I’d advise waiting a few days before trying again, however, as the first clerk may be in a vigilant mood and will be most likely to interfere if you are fresh on his or her mind.

Whenever possible, you should verify to make sure that your name has actually been changed. Don’t take some bureaucrat’s word for it. Wait a few weeks and then request the record to confirm that the change was actually made. Remember my friend’s “a.k.a.” on her credit report? If she had obtained a copy of the report, she would not have been blindsided. Suppose she had found, for instance, that one credit reporting agency had the a.k.a. and another didn’t. Forewarned is forearmed. She could, whenever possible, have done business with companies that used a credit reporting agency that didn’t list her as having an alias. And if it was clear that she was going to be revealed by her credit report, she could have divulged her transsexualism under more favorable circumstances.

Friends and family will also need to be notified. It’s a good idea to prepare a letter or a card, but you will probably want to talk one-on-one with those who are closest to you. Some transsexual people send out “birth announcements.” You can prepare an “instruction sheet” so your neighbors, friends, and family will understand that you really wish to be called by your new name and referred to in the new gender. Use your imagination. You may even wish to have a “coming out” party to celebrate your new name.

It's probably impossible to change your records so thoroughly that a determined investigator would never ferret out that you have changed your gender, but you should be able to edit your paperwork, leaving a paper trail which will enable you to live your life without fear of discovery because of some casual check of your background or references.

### Timing Your Name Change

The timing of your name change is important. If you take your name too early, then you may find yourself having to explain to the friendly state trooper why your driver's license says you are Sister Woman and your facial stubble says you are Mister Man (or vice-versa). If you change your name too late, then you may find it difficult whenever you have to show your ID.

It takes at least 30 days to obtain a name change, so you should begin proceedings several months before you will be using it. Leave a little extra time, for things can sometimes go wrong. My friend Mae is currently in name-limbo because publication of her name did not occur within the time limits set by the court. She must file additional papers, and is at a loss about how to do it, for the clerks at the courthouse would not tell her what to do. She elected to file the papers herself, rather than using an attorney. She must now either hire an attorney or do the necessary sleuthing so she can proceed with her name change. And for her, time is of the essence, because she has been interviewing for work as a woman, and is hoping to get her paperwork changed in time for the reference checks.

Ideally, the name change should happen at the same time as you begin your real-life test. For some, the beginning of real-life test is a clear demarcation. This is fine, if you are physically ready. More often, it is disastrous, as someone with little or no feminization or masculinization and little or no experience in the new role leaps into their new life with both feet. Their life then rapidly deteriorates.

After decades of repression and denial, many transsexual persons experience what is called "gender euphoria" at the thought of entering the real-life test. With peer and professional approval to look into sex reassignment, they rush blindly forward, doing damage to themselves and others and jeopardizing their transitions. It's best to proceed rationally, and that often means slowly, delaying gratification. In my five years of working with other transsexual people, I've found the experiences of these maximum-warp-full-speed-ahead people are uniformly bad. Those who are able to make schedules and stick to them tend to make much better adjustment in their new roles.

Changing your name can be disastrous if you're not physically ready; you will be essentially living in drag, as I was in the late seventies. It's very embarrassing to use the new identification if you're not cross-dressed, and it may be

physically arduous and financially difficult to remain in the new role and at the same time humiliating to abandon it. I've spoken to some very feminized transsexual people who have not had electrolysis, and they tell me how wearying it becomes to put on full makeup in order to get the mail out of the box or pick up a gallon of milk at the convenience market. It pays to be physically ready when you make the transition.

Your name change is an important cue about whether you are in the male or female role. If you are unsure, it would be better to wait before changing it. Give the hormones time to work, and don't neglect electrolysis while you're waiting if you are a male-to-female transsexual. But even if you pass perfectly, you will have to do some work on your paper record if you hope to be successfully employed in the new role.

Not everyone should transition rapidly. The entry into real-life test can not only be very gradual — it may not even have a sharp boundary. My friend Holly called me one day and said, "I've been in real-life test for three weeks. It was so incremental I only realized it yesterday." Holly had been androgynous all of her life, and had been changing slowly, imperceptibly for nearly ten years. The physical difference between "then" and "now" are profound. Her name change came at a time when her androgyny made the name Holly seem perfectly reasonable for her. Incidentally, she kept one of her male names, as she has remained a husband and a father, even while slipping over the gender boundary into full-time womanhood! With one male and one female name, she has an identity for every occasion.

Life's circumstances can also help you in determining the time for your name change. If you are six months from retiring from a job of 30 years, or if you are in the middle of an ugly divorce or child custody battle, then perhaps you should wait. But if you are approaching real-life test and are about to graduate from college and want your diploma to have your new name, or if you are moving to a new city in order to go full time, then perhaps you should go ahead with the name change.

If you are an active member of the military or in the reserves, you should *not* change your name, or, if you do, you should *not* inform the military until you are safely a civilian again. The U.S. military establishment has absolutely no sense of humor about transgendered behavior. Transsexualism is a one-way ticket to a discharge. Once you are out, you may find the military friendly and reasonable in regard to retirement and other benefits, but you don't want to mess with them while you're still enlisted. If you are seen crossdressed or if it is even *rumored* that you crossdress, you may be court-martialed.

### And Now — The Story of My Transition

I most decidedly did not rush into transition. In fact, I waited much longer

than necessary. This was due more to not knowing how to proceed than from fear, but I would not be honest if I didn't admit that I was frightened to death of transition. Would I be comfortable in my new role? Would I be able to find a job? Would I make friends?

I chose to make my transition at the same time as I made a change of job and residence. In fact, I changed my job and city in order to make a clean break. After nearly ten years on hormones, and with most of my beard gone from electrolysis, I loaded a U-Haul in December, 1989, left a good job of ten years and the woman I loved, and moved to Atlanta. I plucked my eyebrows on the way, shaved my legs and then he was a she. I walked on the wild side. I arrived in Atlanta as a woman, and have been one ever since.

Such an abrupt transition worked well for me, for I had become so feminized that almost everyone thought I was a woman even when I was doing my best imitation of a male. It wouldn't have worked without hormones and electrolysis. Believe me, in my former male incarnation, I looked like a biker.

In the late seventies, I worked for a time as a Kelly Girl. My experience was limited; it was too difficult to disguise my beard and I had to wear a wig. Even though I rarely got read, I felt like an impostor. I was trying to be something I was not — a woman. I had the body and testosterone levels of a man, and I just didn't feel right in the role. I had the desire to be a woman, but my body just wasn't ready. Even though I could have continued to work, I was not physically or emotionally up for it. Ten years and many milligrams of estrogen later, I was ready.

An abrupt transition worked for me. And when I say abrupt, I mean abrupt. I had told no one except my lover about my plans to change my gender. Within a few months I had said my good-byes, resigned from my job, and left town.

Other than leaving people I loved and who loved me but who couldn't deal with what I was doing, there were no bumps or bruises in my transition. Losing those I loved was *terrible*. But, it would have been worse if I had been treated badly in public because I was easily readable or if I had been unable to find work because I had not done the necessary physical preparation.

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**IMPLEMENTING YOUR NAME: II**

**T**aking care of the paperwork involved in changing your name is only part of what you need to do. You will also need to get yourself to the point where *you* own your new name, and get others to the point of using it. For many years, I used the name Sheri. I used it, but it wasn't my name. I like to think that some karmic conspiracy endeavored to keep me Dallas. For whatever reason, I was often slow to respond when someone called me Sheri. And if someone was talking about Dallas, the city, or the Dallas Cowboys, my ears would perk up, as if I were hearing my name. I never really *owned* the name Sheri.

If you have chosen a name you are not familiar with, you must bring yourself to the point of responding to it automatically. And what's more, you must learn *not* to respond to your old name. For a time, the circumstances of your life might require you to answer to both names, but only one at a time. It could prove very embarrassing if you answer to the name Daniel in a setting in which everyone knows you as Kathy, or to JoAnn if you are known as Bob. And you don't want to say, "Huh? What?" when someone calls another person by your old name and you are trying very hard to not be that old person.

They say nothing succeeds like success, so the only way you're going to get comfortable with your new name is to use it. You need to familiarize yourself with your new role anyway. You should practice being Danielle or Alfred in the non-threatening setting of a support group or while shopping or for recreation long before you must be Danielle or Alfred at work or in other social settings. Familiarity and ease will come with time and probably without much effort, but there will be a period when being called by your new name will be a novel experience. You don't want that to happen on the first nervous days of your new job in the new gender role.

People who have known you before may have a difficult time using your new name or referring to you with the appropriate pronouns. I like to think that I look very much like any other forty-four-year-old woman, yet, when I go back to my old haunts, I hear myself called "he." I'm quite sure I would hear my old first name also, if I hadn't always used Dallas. I know lots of other people who have that problem.

To some extent, it's simply human nature for those who have known us to continue to refer to us in the ways that were appropriate in the past. There is a good deal of gender inertia to overcome, and some people are just unable to do it, at least to the point of always using the appropriate name and pronouns. It takes some effort, and even those who make a sincere effort may have an occasional lapse. Others won't even bother to try, and a few people may even deliberately use the old name and pronouns. As there's no way to force others to call you by the name you prefer, you have no choice but to live with it. You may choose to avoid being in the company of those who refuse to call you by the right name, but sometimes you have no choice.

If you smile and gently remind someone that they are using the wrong pronoun, you're much more likely to change their behavior than if you curse or scream at them. But no matter how perfectly you manage your transition, no matter how charming you are, you will probably have some people in your life who just don't "get it." You shouldn't be angry, and you certainly shouldn't doubt yourself. Remember, it's gender inertia. No matter how feminine or masculine you are, you're still Sally or Carl to them, and you may always be. It's frustrating, but it's real life.

With time, the situation will improve. When my doctoral committee meets, I hear weird combinations of "he's" and "she's," and every "he" is disconcerting in a life in which I am otherwise exclusively referred to with female pronouns. At one point, I considered getting a tiny little bell to ring each time an inappropriate pronoun was used. I decided against it, as the situation seemed to be taking care of itself. I get called "she" most of the time now in committee, and I didn't have to do anything other than be myself.

Although I don't recommend harping on those who are calling you by the wrong name, I think it is important to explain calmly to them the protocols. Many people have no idea how they are supposed to refer to you. It can be confusing, especially when you are in that in-between period. You can educate them. Most persons, if they respect you, will make some effort to use the name and pronouns you prefer. When you have done all the requisite paperwork, when you have told those around you of your new name and reminded them, when necessary, to use it and to use appropriate pronouns, and when you are comfortable with your new name, you will have achieved something of importance in your transition.

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## CHANGING THE SEX DESIGNATION ON YOUR DOCUMENTS: I

**M**any documents identify you as either male or female. The two most notorious are your driver's license and birth certificates, but college transcripts, employment files, social security records, credit reports, and many other documents tell the world that you are either male or female (the infamous two choices).

Some states, Texas and California for example, will change your records to show your new gender once you begin cross-living. Most states, however, still require proof of surgery. Some states issue new birth certificates, and some amend the existing certificate. Other states will not amend the certificate. Two states, Tennessee and Ohio, have passed laws denying transsexual persons the right to change or amend their birth certificates, even after genital surgery.

The definitive procedure for having one's "sex" designation changed on official documents depends on whether one was born male or female. For born males, there must in most cases be an affidavit attesting that you have had a vaginoplasty, i.e., sex reassignment surgery. For a born female, evidence of a mastectomy may suffice, but proof of a hysterectomy is more usually required. With this surgical proof (or with other evidence in locations, like Texas, which do not require proof of surgery), you can have your birth certificate modified or re-issued, unless you live in one of the following states: Alabama, Florida, Idaho, New York, Ohio, or Tennessee.

Considering recent changes which have taken place, I would wager that only Ohio and Tennessee, the states which deny the changes under law, could not be finessed or persuaded to change your birth certificate. It is a sad commentary on our society that two states would deny transsexual persons such a basic marker of personal identity as a correct birth certificate.

The birth certificate is used primarily for getting other documents which

can themselves be changed to reflect your new name and sex. Once you have a driver's license, passport, social security card, and other identifying documents, you will rarely, if ever, need to show your birth certificate. Usually two or three of the other methods of identification will suffice for any occasion. It is important to have as many documents as possible in the new gender, but the loss of a birth certificate, while important, is not crucial. With an affidavit from your surgeon, you should be able to have all other supporting documents changed. Go through the same list you used for your name change.

There are a number of documents which are used to establish identity. The most important is the driver's license. It's crucial that you have a driver's license which accurately reflects your name, appearance, and gender. You'll need it for cashing checks, to show to the police if you are stopped (even if you weren't driving, they'll want to see it), when applying for a job, and for many other purposes. If you are lucky, you will live in one of the few states which have no sex designation on the driver's license. Most, however, do show you as either male or female. If you don't drive, you might see about getting a state-issued identification card. Some states issue them to those who don't drive. They look like driver's licenses and serve many of the same functions. In some states (like Texas), it is possible to get such an identification card *in addition* to a driver's license; this can be useful while you're in transition, for your driver's license can show you in one mode, and the identification card in the other. Both will reflect your legal name, but a state-sanctioned photo of you in the clothing of the other genetic sex is bound to impress policemen and other officials. Others states (like Pennsylvania) specifically forbid holding *both* a valid driver's license and a non-driver ID.

Another crucial piece of identification is the social security card. The card doesn't contain information about your sex, but that information is on file at the Social Security Administration, and even though you will be issued a card in the new name upon request, the Social Security Administration records will need to be changed.

The driver's license and social security card, like the birth certificate, and to a lesser extent the passport, are "seed" documents which allow you to obtain other documentation. Thanks to a bill passed during Ronald Reagan's administration, you'll need to show at least two of the four documents when applying for employment. You'll also need to show them when opening bank accounts, applying for credit, getting a library card, and even for buying a drink, if you don't look twenty-one. With them, you can build an impressive wallet full of plastic, all with your new name and correct sex designation.

The more documents you have with correct sex and name, the easier it will be to get others. And in general, if your name has already been changed, the sex designation will be easier to get changed. You may find that in some cases

(for instance, on college transcripts) you can ask that the sex field simply be left blank. When I showed the order for my name change, I asked the clerk to leave the sex field blank. In this age of lessened sexism, it hardly seems strange to have a blank field for race or sex. I probably couldn't have persuaded her that I was a female (as I was having her drop the name William from the record), but I was able to get her to delete the sex designation. At some point, I can add it again, if I so choose — but I'm sure I won't bother.

Still, getting those first few documents can be especially tricky. You may run into obstinate clerks or clerks who aren't sure about what to do. Be charming and smile, and then decide how you're going to solve your problem — by going over them, or by going around them. The former is costly in terms of time and energy, and is not guaranteed to work. The latter is not guaranteed to work either, but surprisingly, it is often effective, and without blood, sweat, toil, or tears, and without the loss of energy better expended in other ways.

If your request is refused, ask yourself whether there is another place to obtain the same service. Most states have multiple drivers licenses examining stations, and you can go to the one of your choosing. If you are turned down at one location, you can try another, and this time you may get the change you want. It's much easier than trying to force compliance.

Not long ago, I spoke with a transsexual woman who obtained a court order requiring a change of sex on her driver's license, even though she was preoperative. When she took the order to the examining station, the clerk called a supervisor, and he refused to honor the court order. The woman in question, being an attorney, is highly skilled in negotiation and conflict resolution. She took the matter up with the state attorney general's office. She discovered that there is no law and no regulation about what to do in her case. She is still negotiating with the Assistant Attorney General and may well succeed in getting the sex designation of her license changed, and in the process make things better for other transsexual persons in her state. But she told me that on the particular day when she went to the license examining station, she wasn't up for a fight; she simply wanted the sex designation on her driver's license changed so that she could live her life in a more normal manner.

Just as I never considered that my name might work in my new role, my friend never thought about going to another examining station. Because she chose to work within the system rather than bend the rules a little, she still has an "M" on her license. If she had to do it over again, she would probably just go to another location rather than contacting the state attorney general.

This brings up a point. At all levels, sex reassignment is a difficult process. Many transsexual people, already highly frustrated because of bodies which don't match their sense of person, are absolutely worn down by the expense and stress of the process. There are many obstacles to overcome, and each

one requires a great deal of resolution and stamina. Transsexual people are as honest and forthright as any other group of people, but their particular circumstances make complete truthfulness a frustrating and often dangerous trait. Being completely honest and open in one's dealings can be much like butting one's head into a brick wall. It will eventually wear you down, and it feels soooo good when you stop. Much time and energy can be saved by slight-of-hand misdirection, the gentle civil disobedience I wrote about earlier. If you go up against the system every time, the system will change very little and you'll soon be worn to a frazzle. I learned early in life to pick my battles carefully. For your own good, you should too. When you make a stand, do so, but do so on your terms and because you want to, and not because you have to.

My, my, what kind of person have I become? Here I am counseling people to if not break the law, at least bend it a little. I'll tell you what kind of human being I am. I'm basically honest, but pragmatic. I am someone who believes that the spirit of the law is more important than the letter. I dissembled a bit in my own transition, and still do insofar as making at times a bit of a smokescreen about my past. But I consider myself an honest person. If I found a wallet on the street, I would turn it in, even if it had money in it. I don't cheat on my taxes. But I don't butt my head on the unremitting and unrelenting wall of bureaucracy, except in the rare instances in which it can't be helped. Unless you want a sore head, you won't either.

In the matter of driver's licenses, it may especially pay to be tricky. In Atlanta, Fulton County examiners see many transsexual people and are therefore sensitized to their appearance; furthermore, they know the rules, and in Georgia the rules are: no surgery, no change of sex designation. The state of Georgia has many driver's license examining stations, however, and citizens can use whichever one they wish. I suggest to those in transition in Georgia that they go to one of the surrounding counties, where the examiners are less sophisticated about transsexualism. There's no law against it. It breaks no rules. It's a perfectly legitimate thing to do, and it increases the chances of getting the sex designation on your driver's changed before surgery.

This worked for me. When I moved to Georgia, I went to a rural location. I was armed with a Tennessee driver's license identifying me as Dallas Denny. My photo was very androgynous. But the license said I was a male. I filled in the Georgia application and wrote "F" in the box which asked about my sex. The examiner took my old license and began entering information into the computer. I held my breath, hoping she would not note the "M" on my license, and she must not have, for she said nothing, and when my license came back, it had an "F" on it.

Of course, I might have been okay even if she had noticed. She might have thought it simply an error. If you pass successfully, and if nothing otherwise

points out your transsexualism, the wrong sex designation on a document may be looked at as a mistake. It rocks the world of the clerk less to believe a mistake has been made in the paperwork than it does to believe that you started out as a member of the other sex. Perhaps it just seems more parsimonious to them. Several people have told me that they have had clerks in stores say, "Honey, you need to take a look at your license. I can't believe you haven't noticed it. You need to get this taken care of." The "mistake," of course, is the sex designation.

Even if you don't pass easily, there can be additional perks in going to a rural station. I've had several people tell me that the clerk changed the sex designation at the same time as complying with the court order to change the name. They did so on some occasions because they didn't know any better, and on some occasions they did so just to help out.

With the new driver's license firmly in hand, it will be possible to build a collection of other documents which identify you.

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## YOUR RÉSUMÉ: PASSPORT TO A NEW JOB

**E**xcept for those of us who are lucky enough to be independently wealthy, a regular paycheck seems essential. We need a job so that we can make the money we need to pay for food, shelter, clothing, transportation, and all of life's little amenities. Work is an important part of self-image, and one can become depressed and disenchanted if unemployed for long periods of time. We value ourselves according to our usefulness to society, and without a job we may feel useless and unwanted.

Having a job is especially important for transsexual persons, for one of the unfortunate things about sex reassignment is that practically everything associated with it is expensive. In fact, the only thing I can think of that is not expensive is peer support. Support group meetings average less than ten dollars per meeting, several orders of magnitude less than all of the other things you will be paying for. Electrolysis, clothing, cosmetics, plastic surgery, therapy, endocrinologist, the traveling you will likely have to do in your quest for services, and the cost of hormones and other medications add up to far more than the price of the sex reassignment surgery. And those are just the *direct* costs. The true cost of sex reassignment must include loss of income and property, which can far surpass the money that must be spent on transition. If you lose your \$75,000 per year job and go to work for \$20,000, you'll be out \$55,000 per year, or more than a half million dollars over a ten-year period. If you are ordered by a court to pay alimony or child support, much of your income, even if you do work, will not be available to you. If you lose your house and rent an apartment, the money which was once building equity will be benefiting your landlord. The closer you can come to maintaining or even increasing your previous level of income during your transition, the better off you will be. And the more money you can save, the better.

Money is no guarantee of a successful transition, but it is a lubricant, making it possible to pay for the many services you will need. And the way most Americans get money is by working for it, and by saving it when they do work.

Unfortunately, unemployment is a major problem for transsexual persons. It is not unusual for an individual to be fired or laid off upon revelation or discovery of his or her transsexualism. Even if the cards are played close to the chest, changes in appearance caused by hormones and electrolysis become difficult to ignore. Eventually, there is little choice but to either leave one's job or work out a plan with one's employer which will allow one to remain employed while transitioning. It's rarely clear what will happen, so it's a good idea to save as much money as possible to help you during the more difficult phases of your transition, to help out with the medical expenses which go hand-in-hand with sex reassignment, and to cover relocation expenses if you decide to move or the period of unemployment which may ensue if your transsexualism becomes an issue at the office.

Some transsexual persons stay on their jobs throughout transition. A few large companies like Digital Equipment Corporation and AT&T have policies which allow gradual transition on the job. Others, like Boeing, have policies which allow transition, but only abruptly, and only after sex reassignment surgery. Most companies, large or small, do not have policies about transsexualism, however. While this does not necessarily mean that management is not sympathetic to the needs of their transsexual employee, it does mean that management and other employees will need a great deal of education about gender dysphoria. Their decision may well rest on whether your co-workers support you, how productive you are, how essential your services are to the company, and even how well you pass. If you are the first transsexual person they have had to deal with, it is likely management will be especially confused.

If management and your co-workers are willing to be educated, you can bring them materials like this book. It might be a good idea to ask if your therapist can address the concerns of management and employees (be sure to clear it with your therapist first).

Even with full management support, transition on the job can be difficult. It's impossible to fully overcome a past in which everyone knew you as a man or woman. There will be slips of name and pronouns, and sometimes outright hostility. And, of course, there will be the ever-present bathroom issue. Co-workers of your original gender will become increasingly uncomfortable with you in their bathroom, and co-workers of your new gender may object to you being in theirs. With luck, there will be a single occupancy bathroom somewhere on the premises, or perhaps you can go to another location where your transsexualism is less of an issue. I know a woman who worked in a bank for five years, and never once used the bathroom there. She exercised this remark-

able bladder and bowel control in hopes that if her transsexualism, and especially her preoperative status, were to be revealed, never having been in the bathroom might save her job. I don't think any job is worth the anguish she must have suffered during those five years — but it is a good example of how far transsexual persons will go in order to protect themselves.

Because of the difficulties involved in keeping their original jobs, because they want to disassociate themselves from their pasts, and very often because they are forced to leave their jobs because of their transsexualism, many transsexual persons find themselves on the job market. Some are able to find jobs, despite their employers having knowledge of their transsexualism. A few own and keep their own businesses. But most look for work as members of their new gender. They quickly find that if their presentation is less than convincing or if their paperwork reveals the fact that they are transsexual, they sometimes do not get jobs for which they are qualified and would have doubtless earned if they were in their old roles. This is not surprising; although transsexualism is much more accepted today than it was ten years ago, most people would not knowingly hire a transsexual person or want their sister to marry one. Discrimination exists, and only a few cities in the country, like Seattle and Minneapolis, specifically protect transgendered persons from bias in housing and the workplace. The trend is toward increasing protection, fortunately. The governor of Minnesota recently signed a bill which protects the rights of persons based on sexual preference and gender identity.

If you do lose your job because of your transsexualism, it will be very difficult to sue to get it back. The record of court decisions in this country job-related discrimination is shameful; one Georgia man was fired because although he was heterosexual and was certainly not transgendered, he looked as if he might be gay. [*Smith v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.* (1975). 395 F. Supp. 1098 (N.D. Ga.), *aff'd* *Smith v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.*, 569 F.2d 325 (CA5 Ga, 1978)]. *Smith* sued, but the courts held that he was not entitled to protection under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1963, which forbids discrimination based on sex. There are other cases in which the courts upheld the right of employers to fire persons based on their transsexualism.

It's possible to fight discrimination, but it takes money and time and is tremendously expensive in terms of energy and emotion. It makes more sense to avoid discrimination in the first place, unless the job you had before transition was important enough to fight for. If it is, then by all means, do. If you are seeking a new job, however, the best way to avoid discrimination is for your transsexualism not to be an issue; if your transsexualism is not known, it won't be an issue, now will it?

Thanks to the "great communicator," you must now produce identification when you apply for a job. Under regulations passed during Ronald Reagan's

administration, you must produce proof of American citizenship when you apply for a job. You can't show just any documentation, either; you must have a driver's license or passport, and a social security card. If these documents still say you're a member of the other gender, you may have no choice but to explain your situation. If you do explain, do it proudly. If you're not ashamed, it's less likely that your prospective employer will have a negative reaction. But if your appearance and identifying documents don't give you away, there's no reason for your résumé or references to do so. The decision to disclose should be your option, and not something that is forced on you.

A résumé is a one to two page summary of your work and education histories. Fortunately, you write it yourself, so what goes into it is up to you. You should tailor your résumé so that it doesn't reveal your transsexualism. This will require a certain amount of forethought, and you will probably need to do it yourself. I expect most professional résumé writers would not know how to begin turning a résumé for a female into a résumé for a male, or vice-versa!

It's possible to simply leave out information which is likely to give you away, but sometimes a little creativity can make a job which is traditionally considered masculine to sound feminine or vice-versa. Résumés are carefully doctored to make them sound more impressive anyway; a little more gimmicking can make them seem more within the norm for a member of your new gender. It's like calling a trash collector a sanitation engineer. It's done all the time, and there's no reason you shouldn't do it too.

The ways to feminize or masculinize your résumé are many and varied. If your résumé says you last worked as a "parts man" at a Chevy dealership, you could change it to say "stock clerk," if male-to-female. But if you were a sales clerk at Sears, you could change it to salesman, if female-to-male.

In the job description, you can emphasize tasks traditionally associated with your new gender. Stock clerks do many things. "Duties: Prepared invoices, ordered supplies, managed customer database, assisted with general clerical and secretarial duties." Sounds a bit different from "Duties: loaded and unloaded trucks and stocked shelves," doesn't it? You can go beyond careful choice of words, however, and throw in a couple of totally bogus but highly sex-typed duties that you really didn't do: "My responsibilities included mowing the lawn and routine maintenance on company vehicles." So you didn't change the oil on the company car. Who's going to check? Just be sure that you *can* do the jobs you describe. You could be fired if you claim to know how to change the oil on a diesel rig and it turns out you don't.

Unless you are looking for a job within the national defense system which will require a security clearance, any check of your résumé is likely to be perfunctory, limited to a phone call or two. Usually, the caller verifies that you did indeed work where you said you did when you said you did, with the title



you said you had. It's unlikely that your prospective employer will ask specifics about the job: "Uh, it says here he mowed the lawn and changed the oil in all the vehicles. Sounds fishy to me." Many former employers will not give specific information, anyway.

Most employers simply want to make sure you're who you say you are and that your work experience and education are real and that you didn't walk away from your last job with the contents of the cash register. There's unlikely to be any sort of probe or in-depth check, although if there is any question about your character or appearance, a typical reaction is to dig deeper. And of course, the deeper someone digs, the more likely they are to uncover evidence of your past. And if you are asked point-blank, you should say, "Yes, I am transsexual. I'm also honest and industrious and I am very proud of who I am."

Often an old employer will simply verify that you once worked there and perhaps verify your last salary if requested. Many companies will no longer give out recommendations, positive or negative. Too many firms have been sued by former employees for bad references, so they don't give out any.

The further back in time you go, the less chance there is of someone checking information from your résumé. If your college transcript and last job checked out, what's to be gained from asking about your high school diploma or a job you had ten years ago? And who's going to check on affiliations and past honors? As you work back in your résumé, you can afford to be more creative. You can say you got four boy scout merit badges, or that you were *Girl Most Likely to Succeed* in high school. No, it's not quite honest, but it doesn't hurt anything and can help in some circumstances.

I don't recommend fudging your résumé any more than necessary, however. Some transsexual people go totally overboard. One of my acquaintances concocted an elaborate history which included an abusive husband, a failed marriage, a temporary relocation to Texas (she had never been west of the Mississippi) and a return to the world of work after more than ten years as a housewife. She is very successful vocationally as a woman, and very lucky no one checked out her past.

If your appearance or voice tend to give you away, you might choose to feminize or masculinize your résumé a bit more than you otherwise would, but even then it might not be necessary. People tend to feminize or masculinize what we do anyway, depending on their perception of us. Simply remove any obvious flags from your résumé and let the reader do the work.

Sometimes your résumé will reflect experiences which you could not possibly have had if you had always been in your new role. If you were in an all-male or all-female military unit or other all-male or all-female organization, or if you went to an all-male or all-female college, your experience and education will be of questionable value in your new life. Still, you should change

your records there, even if you decide to just omit that little matter of four years of your life from your résumé. You'll never know when it will come up. And if it does, don't panic. Many people simply won't know that the unit or facility was segregated. In South Carolina, people may know that Coker College is for women only, but in other states they will likely never have heard of it. Besides, many former men's and women's colleges are now co-ed. Coker may now be co-ed, for all I know; the dictionary I used to look it up was published in 1968. Perhaps you can put it on your résumé after all.

Chances are that even if someone has heard of your school, you may be able to bluff your way through like Peter Graves used to do in *Mission: Impossible*. If I had a degree from the Citadel, which is an all-male college<sup>o</sup> in Charleston, S.C., I wouldn't hesitate for a minute to concoct a story that my father was a professor there and that I consequently got to attend special classes for the daughters of professors. Or, if I had attended a less prominent all-male school than the Citadel, I might say that the college has gone co-ed, even if it hasn't. What — are they going to check up on me? Chances are their dictionary is as old as mine, anyway. They might go to the trouble of going to the library or placing a phone call, if they suspected me, but more likely, they would not follow up on the matter.

Either story — the special classes, or "Coker is now co-ed" — might work, and if they did, I might get that job I wanted so badly. If it didn't, well, they would know I was transsexual, but then they would have known that anyway, wouldn't they?

It's one of those white lie instances. In this case, a four year investment of time, sweat, and worry is balanced against making up a story to explain why you have a degree from the Citadel or Coker College. No contest.

Appendix F shows a résumé which has been altered to be more representative of the new gender. You can look at either example as the "before" or "after," depending upon which direction you are headed.

<sup>o</sup> As of January 1994, a federal court ruled that *The Citadel* must open its doors to females as well as males.

## PAST REFERENCES

**Y**ou will need to list personal and work references on your résumé, and chances are one or more will be contacted by your prospective employer. You don't want your transsexualism revealed by a check of your references. The persons you would ordinarily use as personal references are likely to do more harm than good. "Yes, I've known her... uh... him, for twenty years, and, uh, is of high moral character." No matter how highly you are spoken of or how impressive the person giving the reference, you will be given away if the wrong name or pronouns are used.

Fortunately, you will meet people who know you only in your new role. You can use new friends and other transgendered persons as personal references. Unlike Uncle Charlie, there is no gender inertia to overcome.

Ideally, you should give three personal references, one of whom has known you about a year, one for about three years, and one for more than five years. If you've been in the new role only a few months, however, your new friends won't have known you for long enough to serve as a long-time reference. It's possible to thoroughly brief an old friend so he or she will say the right thing, but there's always the chance that they will slip.

There's a solution. Simply decide how long your new friend has "known" you and rehearse with him/her how the two of you met and how long you have known each other. Most people, considering the circumstances, will be happy to tell a little lie for you. Sure, it's less than honest, but it harms nothing. After all, you're cut off to some extent from your past, and simply trying to start a new life. You need a few breaks. Whenever you give that person as a reference, you should call and warn him or her to expect a call.

Job references can be tricky. Your old employer may or may not be willing to give recommendations for you in the new role — and even if the official

decision is yes, they will use the right name and pronouns, it will take only one unfriendly clerk in the personnel office or one staff member unaware of what should be said for you to go down in flames.

You can negotiate with your employer. When I told my employer of ten years about my plans, I was offered the chance to remain. Someone, he said, needed to bring the place into the 90's. I chose not to be that person, but I made it clear how important it was that I not be given away by a slip of the tongue when my references were checked as I was applying for jobs in my new gender. The Assistant Superintendent agreed to write a letter of recommendation for my file. He didn't feel comfortable referring to me with feminine pronouns, but he managed to write a very nice letter using no masculine pronouns. And he was a good enough writer that it didn't sound awkward! He had the letter placed in my file. I asked the personnel office to respond to inquiries about me only by mail, using that letter. To be on the safe side, I looked through my employee file. I was surprised to find only one "incriminating" document, a commendation which used my full legal name. When no one was looking, I removed it from my file and crammed it into my pocket. Another rule broken, but the end justified the means, I think. It was a commendation, after all, and not a reprimand.

I had always been friendly with the folks in Personnel, and they agreed to honor my request to use only female pronouns. I told them if they were uncomfortable with that, they could just say they would forward referral materials, and send a copy of the letter in my file, revealing nothing over the phone. They must have honored my request, for I doubt if I would have my present job if my employer had learned of my transsexualism before hiring me.

If your past is imperfectly concealed, you may lose a few jobs because of accumulating cues as your résumé is checked, but eventually, if you've done your homework, one of the firms you are interviewing should hire you.

If you are unable to arrange a reference from your last job in the appropriate gender, it may be necessary to do creative restructuring of your past. Rather than listing the old job, you make one up and arrange for a friend to receive mail or phone calls and verify that you indeed worked where you say you did. This is obviously risky, but it may be necessary in order to get that first job in the new gender. The worst that can happen is that you don't get the job — and that's almost certainly what would have happened if your transsexualism had been revealed by a call to your last employer. It would be best to use a friend who really has a company, but that may not be possible.

Once you have your first job in the new gender, you're home free, for employers rarely check more than one reference. Your new employer will of course give you a recommendation using the right name and pronoun, and future jobs will be easier to obtain. It's just that first one that's such a bitch.

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## YOUR NEW PASSPORT

**I**f you don't plan on leaving the country, you won't need a passport. However, a passport is very handy for obtaining other documents, and you never know when a tall, handsome man or woman will ask you to jet to Rio for a wild, passionate weekend or when your boss will want you to go straighten out that mess in Geneva. And if you plan to have sex reassignment out of the country, you'll definitely need to have a passport.

Thankfully, the Department of State has a clear policy on passports for transsexual persons. Unfortunately, their policy, with one exception, gives you the sex designation that appears on your birth certificate, and we all know what that one is likely to be if you've not had sex reassignment surgery. Also, it's not uncommon to run into obstructionist clerics who will give you a hard time. If that happens, you should show them Appendix G, which clearly states the Department of State policy. If that doesn't work, you can ask to speak to the legal department. Or you can just send your application to another passport office, where you'll likely get better results.

In the past transsexual persons were unable to get passports in either gender designation, or were required to dress and wear their hair in gender-typed fashion for their passport photos. This was the case also at many driver's license stations. Those who went before you fought the good fight and caused various state organizations and the U.S. Department of State to formulate policy for transsexual persons.

As you will note in Appendix G, you will be able to get a full-validity passport with the appropriate sex designation after sex reassignment surgery. If you are in the final stages of treatment, you can get a one-year passport in the new gender, even before surgery. This is done primarily so that transsexual persons can leave the country in order to receive surgery abroad. The Depart-

ment of State does not define what "final stages" of treatment means, but you had best be sure you're scheduled for surgery, for only under the most mitigating circumstances can you get the passport extended for another year.

Upon completion of surgery, you can get your passport extended to the full ten-year limit. The passport can then be used to obtain other documents, and you can travel extensively abroad with no fear. The passport office will want to see an affidavit from your surgeon before giving you a full-term passport.

Dr. Michel Seghers, a popular sex reassignment surgeon in Brussels, automatically provides such an affidavit to his American patients, and other surgeons will do the same upon request. You will need to send the original document to the passport office, and you will need the original also when getting your birth certificate and driver's license change, so it would be wise to ask your surgeon for several copies of the affidavit. Ask him before surgery, before he has prepared the affidavit.

Even if your passport does not reflect your true sex, your photo and name will be correct. It should suffice for purposes of travel, especially to Western Europe, where in these days of the European Economic Community, they barely glance at passports any more. However, I imagine that it could be embarrassing or even dangerous to have such a mismatched passport in Latin American, Eastern European, or Middle Eastern countries.

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## CHANGING THE SEX DESIGNATION ON YOUR DOCUMENTS: II

Getting the sex designation changed on your documents, even with the proper paperwork, can be an unusual experience. I'll illustrate with an anecdote. Dr. Michel Seghers in Brussels did my vaginoplasty. I had no problem getting my passport. About a month after I sent in my application, I got a call from a clerk who told me the passport would be issued with a female sex designation, but that it would expire after one year. I told her I understood, and a week or so later, it arrived in the mail with a female designation.

A couple of months after surgery, I took my one-year passport and Dr. Seghers' affidavit to the local passport office and asked the woman there to send it to the processing center so it could be changed. She kept puzzling about it: "Why did they just give you one year?" I kept telling her, "Just send this letter along with the passport. It'll explain everything." I had to get back to work, and there were people behind me in line, and she was persisting, so I finally leaned forward and said *sotto voce*, "Look. I had a sex change, okay? That's why it's good for one year only. This letter explains everything. If you'll send it in along with the passport, they'll extend it for the full ten years." She gaped at me, her eyes wide. "You mean you want to be a man?" "That's a good guess," I told her, "but it's not the right one." The ten-year passport showed up a couple of weeks later.

I wasn't quite so lucky with my birth certificate. North Carolina, the state where I was born, does change birth certificates for transsexual persons (betcha Jesse Helms doesn't know that!), but they would not accept Dr. Seghers' affidavit. They wanted a notarized statement, which was rather difficult, as Dr. Seghers and I were a continent and a culture gap apart. I didn't even know if they had notaries in Belgium. I must have the luck of the Irish, for Dr. Seghers

was scheduled to speak that fall at the Southern Comfort convention, which is held just eight miles down the road from my house in Atlanta. Southern Comfort was only a couple of months away, so I wrote Dr. Seghers and told him I would be needing him to sign an affidavit. I copied the original on my word processor and took it with me to Southern Comfort, but Dr. Seghers had brought an affidavit of his own. We found a notary and I mailed the original (we used the one Dr. Seghers brought) to North Carolina, and I soon had a beautiful new birth certificate showing that I had been born female with the name Dallas Denny. It was a relief to get it. I had been a bit apprehensive, for when I had my name change recorded, the Vital Statistics Office simply marked my old name off and made a notation at the bottom of the form that the name had been changed. It would have hardly done to have had a birth certificate which noted that Field 2 (Sex) had been changed. Fortunately, that didn't happen, and I received a clean, beautiful birth certificate.

This is a good time for a caveat. Getting the sex designation on your documents changed is crucial to having a normal life. Until you do, you're always subject to double-takes in check-out lines as the clerk examines your license and unwelcome attention from traffic cops, and of course, it will be difficult to get work. About the best you can hope for is that people will not notice the field, or, if they do, that they will consider that the entry is a mistake. This will probably happen most of the time, but to lead a "normal" life, you need at least a driver's license with the appropriate sex designation. But even though inroads are being made in state bureaucracies, the only legitimate way to get the sex designation changed in most places is to show proof of surgery.

There are other ways, however. I once knew a beautiful Mexican-American transgenderist from Texas. She had been living as a woman for her entire life. She said her mother had a friend in state government, and so her birth certificate had been changed as a favor. She was pre-op, or more likely non-op, and had had a perfectly wonderful life as a woman without surgery, but with female identification.

You probably won't have a friend in the records office, but you may know people in high places. Governors, senators, representatives, judges, and people with lots of connections often get things done behind the scenes. Don't hesitate to use them to get your records changed, especially if you live in one of the five States of Shame (Alabama, Florida, Idaho, New York, Ohio, and Tennessee) that do not change birth certificates. If you explain to someone with this sort of power exactly why you need the sex designation changed before surgery, he or she may be able to get the document altered. With a little more work, you may be able to get the state's policies changed, which will be a big help to those who come after you.

If you are moving from one state to another, you can always do what I did

— turn in the old license and apply for the new one in the new gender. In fact, although I don't know anyone who did this, it would be possible to go to a new state and turn in your old license. After a while, you could go back to your home state, which would hopefully by that time have purged the old information from the computer, and apply for a new license. Consider: if the examiner has to type a sex designation into a blank space on the computer screen, there's unlikely to be a problem. But he or she will almost certainly notice if there is already an "M" or "F" which must be overwritten.

### Stay Out of Trouble!

If you are moving around in society with a driver's license which does not match your genitalia, you must take every precaution to stay out of legal trouble. That means no driving and drinking (not even a single drink!), no drugs, no bar fights, and no public scenes in which you might get arrested for creating a public disturbance. If you do not pass well, you might consider staying out of public bathrooms as much as possible. And, if you are a male-to-female transsexual, you certainly should avoid being in the wrong part of town dressed in a way which might land you a prostitution charge. If you run afoul of the law, in addition to ending up in jail with members of the same biological sex, you are very likely to get your identification confiscated.

If you don't break the law and use common sense, it's unlikely that you'll find yourself in a situation in which your identity will be called to question. But if you are in trouble with the law, the police officer who frisks you is going to find you out. It's best to obey the law. Yes, I know I've told you throughout this book to bend the law in little ways, but you should certainly obey it in the larger ways.

I don't know what would happen if you were found out, but I'm sure it wouldn't be pleasant. Certainly, you would be grilled about it. You might even be prosecuted. Most likely, you would lose your ID, and if you didn't, it would almost certainly be reissued to be consistent with your genitalia.

Some might not think having such documentation is worth the risk if you are found out, but I certainly did. Barring arrest, I didn't have to show anyone my genitals, and I certainly didn't want my womanhood questioned by documents suggesting that I was something other than what I appear to be.

With the proper sex designation, I am able to fully function in the female role. But if my documents had declared me a male, they would in effect have declared me transsexual, and my ability to work and move around in society might have been compromised.

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## INSURANCE

**A**s I have already noted, sex reassignment is an expensive process. Medical insurance can soften the blow, but unfortunately, many expenses which might and probably should be covered by insurance are not. You will probably find that some therapy is covered, but electrolysis, hormones, plastic surgery, and especially sex reassignment surgery are excluded from coverage by most insurers, and the situation is unlikely to improve, even with the major changes that are planned for our health care system.

In my former life, I submitted my therapy visits, endocrinology bills, and hormone prescriptions to my insurer and they were paid without question. I'm quite certain that if the facts of my case had come to the attention of someone at the insurance company, benefits for hormonal therapy would have been denied, and I might even have been required to pay back benefits already given to me. By carefully selecting insurance companies, you can maximize benefits, but coverage can vary from state to state and even from case to case.

In her book *Legal Aspects of Transsexualism* (last published in 1990), Sister Mary Elizabeth noted that these insurance companies did not specifically exclude sex reassignment surgery: Connecticut General; The Equitable; The John Hancock Company; The Hartford; Massachusetts Mutual Life; Metropolitan Life; Prudential; and The Travelers (which, she also mentioned, apparently no longer does health insurance).

Even if your insurance covers your medical expenses, benefits for gender dysphoria won't be given until you have met the criteria for pre-existing conditions (usually a wait of one to two years). Even then, you may find that the company's policy has changed since Sister Mary's book was published.

*(Ed. Note: You must check the actual coverage in your health care plan.*

*Every policy is tailored to the requirements of the company underwriting the plan. Most policies these days specifically exclude sex reassignment surgery. I know, for instance, that CIGNA, Connecticut General's parent company, generally does not cover reassignment surgery.)*

In general, I don't think it wise to buy a specific insurance policy in hopes that it will pay for your surgery or other expenses. Even if it does, most surgeons want the money up front and will not accept a guarantee of payment from an insurance company. Paying for surgery will require some good old-fashioned planning and economizing. But you certainly should determine which medical expenses you can and cannot claim.

It may make more sense to gamble on insurance if you are a female-to-male transsexual for more surgical procedures are often required, and phalloplasty can be extremely expensive. Whichever direction you are moving (FTM or MTF), you may find that paying an insurance bill of several hundred dollars a month in anticipation of reimbursement for medical procedures is an acceptable risk, but be warned — insurers are very inconsistent and arbitrary, paying in some states but not others, in some years but not others, and for some persons but not others.

If you have an individual health insurance plan, there is little probability of people finding out about your transsexualism from your claims. But if you have a group plan — the kind that is usually provided through work — you must make a decision about using benefits which may reveal your transsexualism to your employer. You might elect not to file claims for expenses which may be covered. However, many caregivers will bill in a discrete way. For instance, my endocrinologist gave a diagnosis of hypogonadism as a reason for my visit (which was true, as I had been on female hormones for ten years).

If you are working in your new role and your transsexualism is not known to your employer, you have a choice. You can either sign-on in the new gender role to preserve anonymity, or you can sign-on in the old role, with some risk of exposure. Certainly, if you register in the new gender, you can't expect your health insurance to pay for sex reassignment surgery. There are certain things you'll need to disguise. Ask your therapist and physician to code their entries so as not to reveal your gender dysphoria. For insurance purposes, many therapists will report anxiety or mild depression (a state-of-mind with which most transsexuals are familiar).

*(Ed. Note: The "code" referred to above is a "shorthand" for diagnoses. Third party insurers pay claims based on these codes. The psychological codes are found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Third Edition, Revised (DSM-III R) published by the American Psychiatric Association, and the medical codes are in the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, (ICD-10) published by the World Health Association.)*

Men and women have differential insurance rates based on actuarial tables showing their life expectancies and health risks. Especially if you are pre-operative, you may risk cancellation of your insurance (and not only health insurance, but life insurance and automobile insurance as well) if your transsexualism becomes known. On the other hand, you may risk cancellation of your job if your transsexualism becomes known. I chose to preserve my anonymity, and had no problems, but that doesn't mean that it will work for you. It might be wise to consult an attorney if you have to make such a choice.

It is possible that an insurance company which feels it has paid fraudulent claims might attempt to sue a policy holder to recoup its money. This should not happen if you are discrete, but if it does, the most prudent thing to do would be to hire an attorney fast.

## ESTATE PLANNING

**I**t only makes sense that anyone with an estate of any size should have a will. This is especially true for transsexual people in transition, for they are usually under considerable stress and are probably at a higher risk for death and disability than the general population. Your will should be made with an attorney's help and updated regularly. And you should make certain that someone knows where your latest will is kept.

Some states, including Georgia, allow the individual to specify what will be done in the event of death or incapacity. In Georgia, a document called the Durable Power of Attorney allows you to appoint someone to make decisions about health care if you become incompetent, and to make directions for disposal of your body should you die. Without such a document, the decision will rest with the next-of-kin. This can be disastrous for transsexual people, who are often alienated from their families. Probably the thing most transsexual persons would hate the most would be to be buried or cremated under their old name, dressed in the wrong clothing, yet this is exactly what the family is most likely to do. A Durable Power of Attorney (the name of the document may be different in other states) allows you to avoid this situation.

It is critically important to have such a document if you have a partner to whom you are not married. Without it, he/she will have no right to visit you should you become incapacitated or institutionalized, nor to arrange for your burial or cremation should you die. I know someone whose female-to-male transsexual partner had a heart condition. Knowing he would die, the transsexual asked his partner to arrange for his burial. But when the transsexual died, the family, who had had little to do with him in life, carried the body away and buried him as a woman. His friend was impotent under the law, and has a grass-covered tombstone in her back yard to remind her of that.

The Georgia Durable Power of Attorney bill was passed several years ago after intense effort from the gay community. It was designed to allow an individual to make provisions for his or her long-term partner of the same sex. However, the benefit for transgendered persons is perhaps even greater than it is for gay men or lesbians, whose families are unlikely to bury them with names they no longer use and in clothing they detest. Transgendered persons in Georgia and in other states with similar rules owe a large debt of gratitude to the gay community.

If you are on the receiving end of a will or trust, it is important that the document reflect your correct status. That is, if you are now living as a man, the will should not direct money or possessions to "my oldest daughter." Even if the money is left to "my son" there may still be problems. You should ask your parents or others who may remember you in their will to use your new name and to make your relationship with them explicit.

It would be wise to consult an attorney about the particulars of these and other legal documents.

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**T**he Federal government is remarkably unconcerned about whether you are a man or woman. This was not always the case. I'm sure a transsexual person back in J. Edgar "Mary" Hoover's day would have ended up in the F.B.I. files, if the government was made aware of him or her, but times have changed. The census takers aren't going to say, "Wait a minute. There are one too many men in this census, and one too few women. What do you suppose has happened?" Thank goodness.

You may have to deal with the federal government in any number of other ways. Perhaps you are a pilot and must have periodic FAA physicals, and are wondering how you will keep the physician from noticing your budding breasts. Perhaps you receive government assistance, and must explain that despite your new beard, you truly are your child's mother and not her father. Perhaps you are the principle researcher on a government grant, and the site inspector saw you last as a woman, and now you are a man. Perhaps the IRS is auditing you. And perhaps you returning to the U.S. after surgery overseas, and Customs is questioning your identity. You can find yourself in any number of situations with our government, and things could turn ugly at any time. This will almost certainly be due to the ignorance and ill-will of a clerk. A call to his or her supervisor may help, and if it doesn't, you can call the next in the line of command, and the next, continuing until you obtain satisfactory treatment.

### Social Security Administration

You will want to change your official records at the Social Security Administration. Make sure that they change all of their records, and not just the name which will appear on your card. There is a form which you request which will tell you whether your record has been changed. You can pick up this form at

any social security office or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM and ask for an application for a Social Security card. There is no charge for filing. You will probably need to show name change certificates, and, if you have had surgery, the affidavit from your surgeon.

### Internal Revenue Service

The IRS follows along with the Social Security Administration. When you file your income tax, you should write your new name, add a "formerly known as," attach a copy of your name change certificate and, if you have had surgery, your surgeon's affidavit, along with a letter of explanation and a photocopy of your new social security card. That's all you should need to do. Thereafter, you can file as you always have, but with your new name.

A friend of mine, an attorney, was recently audited by the IRS. This organization's personnel are well-known for their lack of common sense and fair play. The IRS auditor insisted that my friend's sex reassignment was an attempt to change identity to defraud the government. It sounds a bit humorous as I write, but I can assure you my friend didn't find it funny at the time.

### U.S. Armed Services and Veterans Administration

If you have been in the military, you will want to change your records. Appendix H gives the addresses for the various branches of the service. Surprisingly, the veterans I have spoken with have reported no problems in getting records changed and new identification issued, or with getting treatment in Veteran's Administration hospitals, even living in their new roles. This is completely different from the reception they would have faced had they still been in the military. Veterans should certainly not be shy about claiming their benefits; after all, they earned them.

If you are active in the U.S. military and are planning to have sex reassignment, the safest thing to do would be to get out as quickly as possible. Certainly, you have a real need to keep your transsexualism secret as long as you continue to serve.

### Post Office

The post office was once dedicated to stamping out homosexuality in America. In 1979, in the 100th issue of *Transvestia* magazine, Virginia Prince explained how she was pressured by postal inspectors to stop mailing the magazine. To her credit, Virginia stood up to the Feds, but at a price — she was prosecuted by the Federal Government.

These days, there is no problem with receiving mail in another name, so long as it's not done with intent to defraud. When you rent a box, you can simply check a box on the form which says to deliver all mail addressed to the



box. If you live in a rural area where everyone knows everyone else and their business, there may be some risk of exposure, but it's certainly no problem in a town of any great size. I once received mail in Afton, Tennessee, and my box number was 79, which should give you an idea of the size of the town. I was doing a lot of correspondence using a made-up name (Sheri), and in more than a year, nothing was ever said.

### Selective Service

If you were born male and are not yet 18, you will have to register with the Selective Service. If you have transitioned, it should be interesting when you go down to the post office to register. There's no danger of you being called up for the service, although you are required to complete the registration form. If you were born female, there is very little chance that you will ever have any interaction with the Selective Service. But if you should, you would need only explain things to be let off the hook.

### State and Local Governments

State and local governments vary in efficiency, and often even within states, different agencies may have tremendously different atmospheres. You may find yourself interacting with the state or local government in any number of ways, for instance to get professional licenses, to get welfare payments, or because your child is in school. Your treatment may vary from friendly to unfriendly. I would suggest that you conduct yourself with dignity and go up the chain of command if you have trouble.

One service which you may seek from the state is vocational rehabilitation. The jury is still out about whether transsexualism is a disability, but in some locations, state funds can be used for your rehabilitation. Sometimes, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation will even pay for electrolysis, hormonal therapy, and other medical procedures. If you are in need of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, you should certainly look into them.

You may also seek to go back to school in your new role. School officials may be impolite or refuse to honor your identity. You can always present them with a court order, or, failing that, have your attorney contact them.

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# MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

**I**n the United States, post-operative transsexual persons have the right to marry in their new gender. The first such marriage to receive a ruling was *M.T. v. J.T.* ((1976, 355 A 2d 204, Sup Ct. App Div NJ, 1976. Melvin Belli wrote in an article two years later, "The first court ever to validate a transsexual marriage did so partially because the couple appeared so normal that allowing them their marital peace and personal happiness would in no way disserve any 'societal interest or principle of public order.'"

Transsexual people in Britain are not so lucky. April Ashley, a commoner who had sex reassignment, married Sir Arthur Corbett, a titled nobleman. The marriage was never properly consummated. When Ashley sued for divorce in 1970, Mr. Justice Ormrod held that the marriage was invalid because she was not a woman. Ormrod was a physician as well as a judge, but his personal bias and the fact that the marriage was between a commoner and a lord seems to have clouded his judgment. Nonetheless, transsexual people in England cannot legally marry, and this has remained the case despite trips to the European Court of Human Rights by Mark Rees and Carolyn Cossey (Tula).

Although post-operative marriages are valid in the U.S., full disclosure is required before the marriage. It is common in divorce cases for the spouse to claim he or she "did not know," so it is important to verify in some way (for instance, by photographs taken at a gender event with the date clearly visible or by a notarized statement) that the spouse knew about the transsexualism prior to marriage. Otherwise, the marriage may be invalidated.

Most states have liberalized their divorce laws so that spousal support is more dependent upon which party was the breadwinner than the sex of either of the partners. Some judges may nonetheless be intolerant of a transsexual person in a divorce, denying benefits which would otherwise have been

provided. Unless the divorce is amicable (and this is by far the best way to handle a divorce), it would be wise to find the best attorney you can find.

Most divorces involving transsexual people are not those marriages which take place after sex reassignment, but those marriages which commenced when the individual was living in his or her original gender role. Most spouses are unwilling to remain in the marriage, but it is not uncommon for the former husband and wife to remain together in partnership or even sexually active with one another.

In the past, gender clinics required the individual to be divorced before surgery was performed. Some clinics and some surgeons in private practice still require this, but it is an archaic requirement. Martine Rothblatt, a practicing transgendered attorney, assures me that marriages remain valid even after surgery, if both parties desire it. There should be no outside pressures to dissolve the marriage bond, and in fact, if a clinic or physician requires it, they are probably acting unethically without even realizing they are doing so. You should not allow yourself to be pressured into a divorce.

If divorce does occur, it can be unbelievably ugly, with transsexualism taking center stage. Many a divorce which started out in a friendly manner has become vicious when the attorneys got involved. If possible, you and your spouse should seek the services of a professional divorce mediator, who will act in the best interest of all parties involved — including your children, if you have any. When attorneys are presented with a mediated plan, the divorce should proceed smoothly, and at less expense.

Some attorneys think they can have a field day with transsexualism. If you end up in court, and especially if the procedures are adversarial, you should dress in a way which will present your best appearance to the judge. Should you crossdress? I would say yes, if that is how you are living, if you are comfortable in your new role, and if your physical characteristics make you appear “normal” in your new gender-role. If you look better in your old role, and/or if you are not cross-living full-time, then perhaps you should swallow your pride and wear the clothing of the original gender, just this time. Nevertheless, dress in an professional business-like manner, whether you wear men’s or women’s clothing. You should ask the advice of your attorney, but if he or she is not experienced with transgender issues, ask others for their opinion.

If you have filed for your new name but are presenting in the old role, you may find yourself in the incongruous position of being called by your new male name although you are dressed as a woman, or vice-versa. The opposing attorney might do this anyway just to rattle you, even if he or she knows better.

Divorce is an emotional disaster under the best of circumstances, and perhaps more so for transgendered persons, many of whom would prefer to remain in their relationships. Rely on your support group, seek the services of a

professional divorce mediator, and retain a good attorney, and you should be able to get through it with minimum trauma.

### Child Custody and Visitation

There are a number of instances in which transsexual parents have raised their children. Certainly, if the marriage remains intact, there is little danger of losing custody of minor children, but one never knows when someone will take offense. I know someone who found herself talking to a Child Protective Services worker because her full-time crossdressing had been reported to the authorities. She agreed to see a counselor; the case was kept active, with social workers popping in at inopportune times, but she kept her daughter.

There have been some cases in which the transsexual parent was given custody over the other biological parent. The courts are generally better now than they were in the past, but many judges will automatically consider transsexual people to be unfit parents because they do not understand transsexualism. Some judges seem to think transsexual people are sexual deviates. I am sure many more transsexual persons have lost their children than have been able to raise them because of this ignorance.

The right to visit the child may be very limited, or access to the child may be denied based totally on the individual’s transsexualism. Spouses can ask that the child be “shielded” from the transsexual parent, and judges often comply. It is also not unusual for the transsexual person to be required to present in the original role when visiting with their children. This is possible to a point, but after surgical procedures to modify appearance, electrolysis for male-to-female persons, and after hormones have changed the body, it is not so much a matter of how one dresses as it is a matter of who one is. If you look like a man no matter how you’re dressed (or vice versa), it will be easy for someone to claim that you’re not following the judges’ order.

In child custody cases, a mediator can be of great benefit. He or she will make decisions based on the best interest of the children, rather than the best interests of you or your spouse. Attorneys, because of the adversarial nature of divorce proceedings, will not do that.

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## THE CHURCH

I've known four transsexual women who became very involved in the church after entering real-life test — only one happily so. The other three were treated with a mixture of contempt and intolerance that no truly Christian person would ever practice, reminding me that the reason I do not participate in organized religion is that I have found more religious people outside of churches than inside them.

The factor which differentiated the person who was successful in her church from the others was that she was able to keep her transsexualism to herself. Two of the other three didn't pass well and were "read," and the other was outed by context — even in the very large city in which she lives, her reputation preceded her. In all three cases (three different denominations), it was made very clear to these women that they were not wanted. Their preachers asked, "Why are you doing this to me?" or "What do you want here?"

Post-operative status and ability to pass seemed to make no difference. In all three cases, the women were well-liked and were being helpful in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, in all three instances, the minister took them aside and told them they could not join the church, they could not participate in women's ministries and that he would prefer that they not darken the door of the church again, ever.

The fourth woman moved to a new city at the beginning of her real-life test, so there were no unfriendlies around to "out" her. As she passes very well, she is not suspected of being transsexual, and so has done very well. Her minister may very well be as bigoted as the others, but she is treated well because she is a woman in his eyes, and not a transsexual.

This admittedly limited sample leads me to the conclusion that unless one seeks out a traditionally tolerant church like MCC (Metropolitan Community

Church) or the Unitarian Church, the members and ministry will be unwilling to deal with the transsexualism of one of its members. It doesn't matter if the sex reassignment was over ten years ago. It's very sad, for their behavior is a clear rejection of Jesus' teaching of acceptance of diversity.

I've never understood the hypocrisy involved when people who correct their dental and vision problems, have their noses fixed, wear cosmetics to alter their appearance, have their male babies circumcised, and have had their appendixes removed, get uptight about sex reassignment. I don't understand why otherwise intelligent people seem to believe that they can legitimize their homophobia, transphobia, and other intolerance by wrapping it in a cloak of religion, as if God wrote His word in King James' English.

The Bible most of us believe in as the foundation for modern Christian religions is a poor translation of a poor translation, written in an obsolete language, and is based upon works which middle-class and probably sexist male clergy selected from a pile of manuscripts *they* decided were worthy of inclusion. If the Bible is the Word of God, it has certainly been diluted by man.

Many clergy and so-called religious people cite Deuteronomy 22:5 as evidence of God's displeasure with crossdressing. In her book, *The Cross and the Crossdresser*<sup>o</sup>, author Vanessa S. notes that there is a historical context for this verse, and that its major focus concerned pagan religious rites, and not crossdressing. Additionally, Deuteronomy is in the Old Testament which is made obsolete by the New Testament. The New Testament, as Dr. Floyd Dennis, a graduate professor at Vanderbilt University would say, "was written after God became a Christian." In other words, it was written after the birth of Jesus. Modern Christians do not follow Old Testament Law — they eat pork, for example, and wear cloth of mixed fibers — but some do not hesitate to invoke Deuteronomy 22:5 to justify their personal feelings about crossdressing, which is illogical.

It is incumbent upon all persons, Christian or otherwise, to acknowledge personal feelings as separate from religious beliefs. I could go on about this, but it angers me, so I'll stop now. But don't tell anyone in your church, ever.

<sup>o</sup> Also published by Creative Design Services.

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## WRAPPING UP

**I** could go on discussing every conceivable situation in which you might need to re-negotiate your identity, but this is not a cookbook. You should take advantage of some of the strategies I have discussed so you can deal with the vagaries of the situations you encounter. I can guarantee that there will be any number of occasions when you will have to think on your feet.

Transsexualism is a long strange trip, but it does not have to be a painful one. In my case, the pain and fear of my early years have been more than offset by the joy, companionship, and sense of achievement that has characterized my post-transition life. The road was certainly long and uphill, but from up here on the mountaintop, the view is beautiful.

## APPENDICES

- A: Sample Letters from A. Therapist
- B: Names Which Can Be Used by Both Men and Women
- C: Examples of Name Change Forms for Georgia
- D: Sample Identification Card
- E: Places to Contact When Changing Name/Sex Designation
- F: Sample Résumés
- G: U.S. Passport Policy for Transsexual Persons
- H: Addresses To Contact When Changing U.S. Military Records

## APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LETTERS FROM A THERAPIST

### Example I: Male to Female Transsexual

A. Therapist  
Oedipus Office Complex  
Suite 666  
State of Confusion, GA 19999

1 January, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

Jan Smith is in a therapy program for gender dysphoria syndrome (transsexualism) and is required to cross-dress twenty-four hours per day in preparation for sex reassignment surgery. She must present herself in female attire at all times, and has been doing so exclusively since 1 February of this year.

I have seen Ms. Smith on a regular basis since June 1991, during which time she has made a smooth adjustment in her new role. She is responsibly employed, does public service work in the community, and has made the necessary physical, emotional, and social preparations for her upcoming sex reassignment surgery. She should be addressed with female pronouns and treated as you would treat any other woman.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Oedipus Office Complex, Suite 666, State of Confusion, GA 19999 or by phone at (555) 555-5555.

Sincerely,  
A. Therapist

### Example II: Female to Male transsexual

A. Therapist  
Oedipus Office Complex  
Suite 666  
State of Confusion, GA 19999

1 January, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

Marty Smith is in a therapy program for gender dysphoria syndrome (transsexualism) and is required to cross-dress twenty-four hours per day in preparation for sex reassignment surgery. He must present himself in male attire at all times, and has been doing so exclusively since 1 February of this year.

I have seen Mr. Smith on a regular basis since June, 1991, during which time he has made a smooth adjustment in his new role. He is responsibly employed, does public service work in the community, and has made the necessary physical, emotional, and social preparations for His upcoming sex reassignment surgery. He should be addressed with male pronouns and treated as you would treat any other man.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Oedipus Office Complex, Suite 666, State of Confusion, GA 19999 or by phone at (555) 555-5555.

Sincerely,  
A. Therapist

## APPENDIX B: SOME NAMES WHICH CAN BE USED BY BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

These are just a few of the hundreds of names which work well for both genders. Many were once considered to be boys' names, but have become increasingly popular as girls' names in recent years. Others are not common enough to have strong associations with either gender. In many cases, there are alternative spellings. Usually, one of the spellings is a feminized version of a boy's name, but in most cases, the original spelling is often used for girls as well as boys.

Adrian/Adrienne, Ashley, Aubrey, Audrey, Avery,  
Billy/Billie, Blaine, Bobby/Bobbi, Bret/Brett,  
Carmen, Carol/Carroll, Cary/Carey, Chic, Chris/Kris, Corey/Cory,  
Dale, Dallas, Dana, Darryl, Dee,  
Erin, Eddie/Eddy,  
Frances/Francis,  
Jacky/Jackie, Jan, Jay/Jaye, Jean/Gene, Jerry/Jeri, Jesse/Jessie, Joe/Jo,  
Kelly/Kellie, Kerry/Keri, Kim/Kym,  
Lane/Layne, Lauren, Lee/Leigh, Leslie, Lyn/Lynn, Lonnie/Loni,  
Marian/Marion, Marty/Marti, Max, Merle, Micky/Mickey/Micki,  
Pat, Peyton,  
Randi/Randy, Ray/Raye, Rene/Renee, Ricky/Ricki, Ronnie/Ronny/Roni,  
Sandy/Sandi, Sean/Shawn, Shannon, Shelly/Shelley, Sidney/Sydney,  
Teddy/Teddi, Terry/Terri, Tony/Toni, Tracy/Tracey/Traci,  
Willy/Willie/Willi.

## APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF NAME CHANGE FORMS

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

)  
)  
) CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
)  
Petitioner )  
STATE OF GEORGIA )  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

### PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

Petitioner files this petition to Change Name and shows the Court the following:

1.  
Petitioner is \_\_\_\_\_, who resides at \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia 300\_\_\_\_
2.  
Petitioner is of the age of majority, having been born on \_\_\_\_\_.
3.  
Petitioner desires to change (his/her) name from \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_.

4.  
The reasons for such a change in name requested are as follows: Petitioner wishes no longer to use a traditionally (feminine/masculine) name as (she/he) is of the (male/female)gender.

5.  
This petition is not submitted with the intention of defrauding another of any rights.

Wherefore, Petitioner prays that his name be changed from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Submitted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner  
Pro/Se

Appendix C, cont'd.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)

Petitioner

CASE NO.

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

VERIFICATION

Personally appeared before the undersigned officer, duly authorized to administer oaths, the below named affiant being personally known to said officer and who under oath deposes and says as follows:

1.

That the statements contained in the foregoing petition to change name are of affiant's own personal knowledge, said statements of fact are true and correct, and further affiant sayeth not.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Affiant/Petitioner  
Pro/Se

Sworn to and subscribed before me;

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 199\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

Appendix C, cont'd.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

)  
)  
)  
)

Petitioner

CASE NO.

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

CERTIFICATE OF CHANGE OF NAME

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has obtained final Order of change of name in the Superior Court of \_\_\_\_\_ County, Georgia, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_, as shown by the records of the Court.

The name of \_\_\_\_\_ has been changed to \_\_\_\_\_.

Given under the hand and seal of said Court, this the \_\_\_\_\_ day, of \_\_\_\_\_, 199\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CLERK, SUPERIOR COURT

Appendix C, cont'd.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

)  
)  
Petitioner ) CASE NO.  
)  
)

STATE OF GEORGIA  
COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

DECREE

The above and foregoing Petition to Change Name coming on to be heard, pursuant to law, and it appearing that notice has been published pursuant to law and that no objections have been timely filed, and it further appearing that sufficient grounds exist for the granting of the relief prayed for in said Petition and that no reason appears showing why said prayers should not be granted, it is hereby DECREED that the name of \_\_\_\_\_, Petitioner, be changed to \_\_\_\_\_ and that such name change shall not operate to authorize Petitioner to fraudulently deprive others of any legal rights under law. It is further DECREED, that all records be changed to conform to this decree and that, upon receipt of notification from a physician of the completion of surgery, the birth certificate shall be changed to reflect the new gender.

\_\_\_\_\_  
JUDGE \_\_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR COURT

Appendix C, cont'd.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF  
RESTRICTED CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

This is to certify that I have received a copy of the Decree, issued by the Superior Court of \_\_\_\_\_ County, State of Georgia, and dated \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_

This Decree requires the change of all records showing the name of \_\_\_\_\_, ( female / male ), to \_\_\_\_\_, ( male / female ). Failure to make said changes will be a violation of a court order.

Release of information regarding the prior name and gender is not authorized and may be in violation of court orders.


RECEIVED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COMPANY NAME  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WITNESS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE



## APPENDIX D: SAMPLE IDENTIFICATION CARD

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Paste<br>Your<br>Photo<br>Here  | <h3 style="text-align: center;">Identification</h3> Name: _____<br>Street: _____<br>City: _____<br>State: _____ Zip: _____<br>Height: _____ Eyes: _____<br>ID# _____ |
|  | _____<br><i>Signature</i>  |

The person presenting this card is transgendered and must crossdress. Crossdressing and transgendered behavior are common. They do not represent a threat or a mental illness. This person is not in violation of any known law merely by presenting themselves in their gender-role of choice. For more information, please contact The American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc., (404) 939-0244, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033, or The Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc., (610) 630-1437, P.O. Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

This card is not a legal means of identification

### HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN ID CARD

Copy the template above onto card stock. Using a typewriter, enter the information required, or print very carefully. Cut out the hole for your photo (it's 1-inch square). Find a nice photo and trim it to fit the hole. Cut the two cards to the same size and glue them together. Find or buy a plastic laminating kit, the kind that uses adhesive, and laminate your new ID card for protection.

Card design © 1994 by Creative Design Services. All rights reserved. This card may not be sold or distributed in any manner.

## APPENDIX E: SOME PLACES TO CONTACT WHEN CHANGING NAME/SEX DESIGNATION

|  |   |
|--|---|
| The Post Office  | Veteran's Administration                                |
| Dept of Vital Statistics (for Birth Certificate)                     | Churches  |
| Driver's License Examining Station                                   | Charities   |
| U.S. Passport Office   | Clubs & Social Organizations                            |
| Social Security Administration                                       | Library   |
| Internal Revenue Service   | Bank (checking, savings)                                |
| High School  | IRA/KEOGH   |
| Colleges, Universities   | Safe deposit box  |
| Trade Schools  | Credit Union  |
| Vehicle Registration and Other Titles                                | Employers, Current and Former                           |
| Voter Registration   | Creditors   |
| Leases   | Friends   |
| Utility Companies  | Family  |
| Pension Fund   | Neighbors   |
| Loans  | Physicians  |
| Professional Organizations   | Dentist   |
| Magazines/Journal Subscriptions                                      | Eye Doctor  |
| Professional Licensing Agencies (MD, psychology, hairdressing, etc.) | Stockbroker (For Stocks and Bonds)                      |
| Credit Card Companies  | Attorney (For Wills and Trusts, Stocks and Bonds, etc.) |
| Credit Reporting Bureaus   | Insurance Agent   |
| U.S. Military Organizations  | Utility Companies                                       |
|  | Landlord  |

## APPENDIX F: SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS

*Note: the following résumés. The first is obviously that of a male, the second that of a female. Either of the two could be the "original" résumé, and either the "doctored" résumé. Both reflect the same experiences, but simply changing a few words, adding a few, and leaving out a few others make them seem very different.*

### Résumé

29 December, 1993

Name: Donald James Smith; Born: 14 August, 1960; Sex: Male

Job Objective: Parts Manager for Automobile Dealer

### Personal

Divorced, no children. Friendly, outgoing. Enjoy model railroading, movies, backpacking.

### Education

1978-1981, Central State Community College Knoxville, Tennessee. Received Associates of Arts Degree with major in mechanical drawing, 1981.

1973-1978, East Ridge High School Knoxville, Tennessee. Graduated with honors in science and math, 1978.

### Work Experience

2/82 - 2/85, American Food Stores; Knoxville, TN; Position: Stock Boy;

Supervisor: Annie Meriwether.

Job Description: Stocked shelves, bagged groceries, ran cash register.

Reason for Leaving: Found better job at Andrews Department Store.

2/85 - 4/89, Andrews Department Store; Position: Salesman;

Supervisor: Marshall Brown.

Job Description: Sold major appliances.

Reason for Leaving: Business was sold to large corporation.

7/89 - present McDrew Chevrolet; Position: Parts Man;

Supervisor: Bob McDrew.

Job Description: Unloaded trucks, stocked parts on shelves, waited on customers. Served as assistant parts manager.

Reason for Leaving: Seeking better paying position.

### Résumé

29 December, 1993

Name: Donna Jane Smith; Born: 14 August, 1960; Sex: Female

Job Objective: Parts Manager for Automobile Dealer

### Personal

Divorced, no children. Friendly, outgoing. Enjoy movies, fine dining, antiques, backpacking.

### Education

1978-1981, Central State Community College, Knoxville, Tennessee.

Received Associates of Arts Degree, 1981.

1973-1978, East Ridge High School, Knoxville, Tennessee. Graduated with honors in science and math, 1978.

### Work Experience

2/82 - 2/85, American Food Stores, Knoxville, TN Position: Cashier;

Supervisor: Annie Meriwether.

Job Description: Ran cash register, bagged groceries, stocked shelves.

Reason for Leaving: Found better job at Andrews Department Store.

2/85 - 4-89, Andrews Department Store Position: Sales Clerk;

Supervisor: Marshall Brown.

Job Description: Sold major appliances.

Reason for Leaving: Business was sold to large corporation.

7/89 - present, McDrew Chevrolet; Position: Parts Clerk;

Supervisor: Bob McDrew.

Job Description: Served as assistant parts manager. Waited on customers,

stocked parts on shelves, helped with truck unloading.

Reason for Leaving: Seeking better paying position.

## APPENDIX G: U.S. PASSPORT POLICY FOR TRANSSEXUAL PERSONS

Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520  
August 18, 1978

I refer to your July 20 letter to the Passport Office.

When an applicant has changed his/her name, the passport will be issued in that name if the applicant presents a court order changing the name. When the applicant has not obtained a court ordered name change, a passport will be issued in the assumed name only when the applicant submits the following:

- a) Affidavits executed by two or more persons attesting that they have known the applicant by both names and that the applicant has used the assumed name exclusively for at least the past 5 years;
- b) Documentary evidence such as school records, military records, employment records, tax records, or other public records; and
- c) Identification in the assumed name only.

A transsexual who meets the above requirements may have a passport issued in a new name.

In addition, a transsexual may have the sex designation in the passport changed from that indicated on the birth evidence provided the applicant submits a doctor's letter which states that the applicant is a post-operative transsexual or a pre-operative transsexual who is in the final stages of treatment prior to surgery. If the applicant is post-operative, a full validity passport will be issued. If the applicant is pre-operative, a passport valid for one year will be issued. Unless a pre-operative applicant shows extenuating circumstances, a passport will not be extended until the applicant submits a doctor's letter stating that the surgery has been performed. The reason for this is, as stated above, a pre-operative applicant must be in the final stages of treatment prior to surgery before a passport will be issued with the new sex designated therein.

This policy is based on 22 U.S.C. U211a which grants the Secretary authority to issue passports "under such rules as the President shall designate...". Executive Order No. 11295, 31 Federal Register 10603 (1966) designated the Secretary to exercise authority conferred upon by the President by Section 211a. In addition, 22 U.S.C. U2658 provides that "the Secretary of State may promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the functions... vested in the Secretary of State...".

Based on the above authority, the Secretary has promulgated rules and regulations pertaining to the issuance of United States passports. Title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 51.24 concerns the issuance of passports to individuals who have changed their names. A copy of the passport regulations is enclosed for your convenience.

There is no regulation which specifically deals with the sex designation in the passport. Our policy explained above is based on the fact that the passport is a document of identity as well as citizenship and is highly regarded as such both domestically and abroad. Accordingly, the passport must be issued with data which best identifies the bearer. We believe that a pre-operative transsexual whose treatment has progressed to the final stages prior to surgery can, in most cases, be better identified by the new sex.

The passport is limited in validity to one year because, until surgery is completed, issuance with the new sex designation is an accommodation.

I hope this information is of assistance to you.

Sincerely,

Michele E. Truitt, Acting Chief  
Legal Division Passport Office  
by: Robert W. Knott Attorney Advisor

Contents of letter verified 22 April 1988 by William B. Wharton, Director, Office of Citizenship Appeals and Legal Assistance, Department of State, Washington, D. C. 20520. Contents of letter re-verified 14 July 1989 by Bonnie Lea-Brown, Attorney Adviser, on behalf of William B. Wharton, Director, Office of Citizenship Appeals and Legal Assistance, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520.

*(The above information was obtained by Sister Mary Elizabeth, and was downloaded from one of the many computer bulletin boards on which it appears.)*

## **APPENDIX H: ADDRESSES TO CONTACT WHEN CHANGING U.S. MILITARY RECORDS\***

*Application for correction of a military or naval record must be submitted on Dept. of Defense Form 149 and must be submitted within three years of discovery of an error or injustice. DD Form 149 may be obtained from the Veteran's Administration and from the various boards.*

### **Review Boards**

(for reviewing discharges)

Air Force National Personnel  
Records Center (GSA)  
9700 Page Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63132

Army CO USARCPAC  
9700 Page Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63132

Coast Guard  
Commandant (CED)  
U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters  
Washington, DC 20591

Navy & Marine Corps  
Navy Discharge Review Board  
801 N. Randolph Street  
Arlington, VA 22203

### **Correction Boards**

(for correcting records)

Air Force USAFMPC  
(AFPMDRA1B)  
Randolph AFB, TX 78148

Army Board for Correction of  
Military Records  
Dept. of the Army  
Washington, DC 29310

Coast Guard  
U.S. Coast Guard  
ATTN: Senior Member, Board for  
Correction of Coast Guard Records  
Washington, DC 29591

Navy & Marine Corps  
Board for Correction of Naval  
Records  
Dept. of the Navy  
Washington, DC 20370

\*From *Legal Aspects of Transsexualism*, Sister Mary Elizabeth, 1990 edition, pg. 4., reprinted by permission.

# ***About The Author***



## **Dallas Denny**

Dallas is well-known for her work on transgender issues. She is a member of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, Inc., and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex.

She is founder and executive director of the American Educational Gender Information Service, Inc., (AEGIS) a national clearinghouse for information about gender dysphoria, publisher of *Chrysalis Quarterly*, and founder of Atlanta Gender Explorations, a support group for persons who are exploring non-traditional gender roles.

Dallas also works as a Behavior Specialist in Georgia. She has more than twenty years of experience working with persons having mental and physical disabilities, and has been working in the area of gender issues since 1989.

Dallas has a Master of Arts degree in Psychology, and is a Licensed Psychological Examiner in the state of Tennessee. She is completing doctoral studies in Special Education at the Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.

She has published in many periodicals and a number of peer-review professional journals. She has written four novels, and is a songwriter as well.

Her book *Gender Dysphoria: A Guide to Research* will be published this year by Garland Publishing.

Dallas is writing a companion to this volume, *Managing Identity in Interpersonal Situations* to be published by Creative Design Services.