

ENDOCRINOLOGIST TALKS TESTOSTERONE AT SUMMER 1990 GET-TOGETHER

Dr. George P. Fulmer, a San Francisco endocrinologist who has worked with female-to-males for over 21 years, addressed our FTM Get-Together on Sunday, June 10, 1990. Seventeen FTM's and their five guests attended, three traveling all the way from Los Angeles and one from Las Vegas. Copies of the pharmaceutical package inserts distributed with Depo-Testosterone, Delatestryl and generic testosterone were made available at the meeting.

"It pays to have a very conservative approach to testosterone therapy," Fulmer began, "because it's going to make changes that are irreversible. It should be preceded by literally years of thought and discussion and a questioning attitude before one opts to undertake hormonal treatment. The history of treatment really doesn't date back for a long time, so consequently those who started to treat people a few decades ago didn't really have anything to go on and had to feel their way. Now as a result of those initial attempts, a fair consensus has been arrived at as to what seems to work the best, but there are variations. No one can claim to have the entire answer, and certainly we won't have a lot of information about long-term results for quite a few more years. We do have a lot of information on short-term results.

"There really aren't many short-term hazards. During the years I've been using testosterone, the two conditions that bother FTM's the most are the occurrence of acne, and loss of hair."

Dr. Fulmer went into a detailed scientific explanation of the structure of testosterone in the various esters (cypionate and enanthate) and the way in which the male hormone reacts in the female body. "You're going to grow a beard, your voice is going to become deeper, the clitoris will become enlarged, the muscles will enlarge, the blood count will go up, the skin's oily glands are going to hypertrophy, and the menses will stop.

"What are the dangers of taking testosterone? We don't know," admitted the doctor, "but we think it's pretty safe. When you undertake lifelong treatment and change your body to such a degree as you are doing, you are probably taking on the life-span of a male as opposed to that of a female. We all know that females are the stronger sex and live longer; currently they're living about 6-7 years longer than men. In contemplating this kind of treatment, FTM's should consider whether they want to live a shorter life. It's possible they will, just by accepting this treatment. The pituitary in some people is so sensitive that I always tell anybody that, as far as fertility goes, you have got to be darn sure that you don't want to maintain your fertility or you shouldn't take hormones of any kind, because once the opposite hormone is administered for a while, some people lose their fertility.

"It's been found in FTM's who have had their ovaries removed and have been on testosterone for one to four years or more, that 80% of their ovaries have polycystic changes. It is a nonmalignant cystic change. What this means for when you turn 60, no one knows yet, but it's one of the things we do know about changes that occur pathologically in persons on testosterone treatment."

One FTM asked about the differences between Delatestryl, Depo-Testosterone and generic testosterone. "We all react differently to some extent," Fulmer said, "and that's why trading anecdotes gives us a wide variety of opinions because we're all different. All I can say is, you find out what's best for you. If you opt for a generic and all of a sudden notice you're feeling a lot different, obviously you're going to switch to something else. But I think this would be extremely rare to have this happen. Generics are supposed to be equivalent,

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the same ester, and should work just as well. In fact, some of the generics may actually come from the companies that make Delatestryl and Depo-Testosterone. It should be good and if it's not, you will know, and it shouldn't hurt you because all it will mean is: it won't work! And you'll find that out rather quickly. It's much more apt to make a difference with where you inject yourself, how much exercise you get to influence absorption of the drug (if you're doing a lot of exercise you may absorb it more quickly this month than last, and would make your peak a little sooner), or you might get it in a slightly different place where the absorption is a little different. So these type things may affect these ups-and-downs you feel more so than any variation in the drug because of where it was made. I wouldn't hesitate at all to use a generic but if you already are happy with what's happening, don't switch, unless you're forced to, economically, or some other reason."

Testosterone in oral tablet form was also discussed. "The problem with oral testosterone is, in making it able to be absorbed and utilized, it has the unwanted side effect of interfering with the detoxification process in the liver, so some people get jaundiced. Usually it's reversible; if you stop the drug, you're okay. Unfortunately the oral drugs can cause liver tumors, a rare type of hepatitis, and there's been a rare reported case in people on really long treatment with orals having cancer. So for that reason I never use the oral testosterone."

Fulmer answered questions concerning allergic reactions to testosterone, androgen levels in prehypothalamic FTM's, hot flashes, hermaphroditism, regressive changes in FTM's who discontinue the male hormone, and the decision to "take a break" from hormone treatment ("Perfectly okay!" Fulmer said).

Our next FTM Get-Together will be held Sunday, September 16, in San Francisco. We will be showing the controversial X-rated video, *Linda/Les and Annie*. All those planning to attend should be forewarned that this video contains graphic depictions of FTM surgery and explicit sexual behavior.

As a special treat, FTM members are invited to the F-to-M Gathering in Seattle on September 2. Their program will include excerpts of *TS/Crossing*, performed by Susan Finque (see review in FTM #10), and male impersonator Maggie Bloodstone as David Byrne.

NEWSLETTER LATE FOR A REASON

This issue of FTM is over a month late. As many of you know, I have AIDS and spent several weeks in the hospital in September, weighing in at 88 lbs. I'm home and on the mend, now, though my energy level is very low. Look for changes in future issues of FTM as volunteer members help produce the newsletter.

Lou Sullivan

FTM MALE BOX

An Open Letter:

"Gender Worker" (aka "Gender Consultants") has formally closed as of June 30, 1990 and mail will not be forwarded to my new post office box.

The reasons for my retirement from the transgender community (after 19 years of primarily philanthropic service) are twofold: firstly, this very time-consuming and energy-draining activity is seriously interfering with both my recent marriage and my new career, and secondly, a reoccurrence of the severe burnout symptoms I suffered two years ago is once more beginning to cloud my horizon.

It is high time that I make that final permanent break with this fringe community (the "paraculture") and let myself, at long last, mainstream into larger society like "regular folk." After all, I am not gay, but straight, and I consider myself a man, not a transsexual.

The time is also nigh for me to pursue other interests which I have put "on hold" for almost two decades: ... like in-depth writing, ... traveling, ... camping, ... and like just relaxing and doing nothing

I am tired of giving; I want my turn to take a little, too -- and to partake of the finer things in life. I'm also tired of working ("gender working") and of being so serious all the time; I need to play a little, too -- and to have some fun, like everyone else.

Furthermore, I am very, very tired and I'm also tired of transsexuals -- many or most of whom I find to be very "lacky" (to use a gay term), and very often "moochers" and "whiners" who pick the brains of helping professionals and resource people like me, who suck dry the support group leaders and peer-counselors (whom they then conveniently toss aside like an old bone once they've picked clean all the meat and sucked out all the lifeblood), who stab in the back fellow transsexuals and/or transvestites, and who are so "into" their self-pity trips (citing TSism as a handicap), they are insensitive to the needs of their significant others, family and friends, and pay no heed to the rest of humankind.

I do feel sorry for the remaining few resource workers and peer-supporters out there who never quite seem to get the "stroking" and the emotional and financial support they need to carry on. I firmly believe that, more than anyone else I know, I have tried to provide this so very necessary support through regular networking and also by simple tokens of recognition....

In any event, I am still planning to complete my anthology and Kim Stuart has just recently reassured me she will write the Foreword as she had originally promised. Anyone wishing to submit a piece of rhyming poetry or free verse related to TSism, TGism, Androgyny or TVism, please send same to: Rupert Raj-Gauthier, Box 5963, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1P4. [FTM has been informed that all mail sent to this box has been returned to sender.] If you wish to see this work in print, please make an appeal to the I.F.G.E., Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778, to publish this 7-year collection of close to 250 poems. (I desperately need more F-M poems, as I only have about 50.) Thanks for your participation!

In closing, I shall continue to welcome personal letters from those resource workers with whom I've been corresponding (and I may also be inclined to reply to new resource workers). However, I will not respond to any inquiries whatsoever regarding TSism, TVism or TGism other than those vis-a-vis my anthology), personal or professional, and I will not reply to "consumers," for I am now finally retired!

Farewell, Adieu, Bon Voyage, Best Wishes, Good Luck, Good Cheer, Take Care, Go In Peace, Be Good, Be Happy, & Have A Great Life!
All the Best,
Rupert Raj-Gauthier

Dear FTM,

The June 1990 issue has given me a lot to think about, some of which I would like to comment on. Dr. Walker's quoted comments and parts of the letter from Johnny A. seemed to blend in my mind on what I consider to be quite vital issues. First, I suppose I qualify as somewhere near what I perceived as Johnny's definition of an "ideal TS." I'm not sure what "politically correct" or "well-behaved" means, but I liked the sound of "well-balanced" quite a bit. In as much as my transition was difficult, as I suppose it must be, it was not devastating. I was supported by my family, friends, colleagues and co-workers, which I appreciated deeply, but did not consider essential to my final decision to change my gender identification. Ultimately, the decision was based on this: is this what I want to do, will it truly enhance my life and am I prepared to do whatever it takes to complete the process in a healthy, constructive way once I begin? Coming to the answer "yes" meant coming around to face the main player: me.

Before deciding anything else, I had to decide who I was as a person, not as a gender, because I carry those values with me now as I did then. Dr. Walker suggests that the introduction of testosterone into the FTM's body produces powerful, uncontrollable "male-like" urges not unlike an adolescent boy with "normal male pubertal qualities" that were unsettling just in print! I must admit in all honesty that I can feel a difference that I attribute to hormonal changes in my emotional make-up; however, may I remind the reader that adolescent boys in the age range quoted of 15-22 have two major elements missing that many FTM's can take advantage of. Most of us are not 15-22, given the limits of the psychological and medical requires for intervention, and therefore we are, hopefully, a bit more mature. In addition, FTM's must have completed a considerable amount of living as a female and therefore have experienced the oppression of females in this society. I don't believe that the majority of FTM's just forget that and toss it aside. It gives us an understanding and sensitivity that NO adolescent boy will ever have. To imply that crude and insensitive behavior is a result of hormones and out of our control is like saying that men rape women because they cannot stop themselves, and I will not accept that. Our values, and our willingness to live by them, are not hormonally induced. And inappropriate behavior is just that.

Finally, in response to the *Hustler* magazine article that seems to have raised such concern, it is my opinion (and thereby perhaps only valuable to me) that the obvious has been understated. It seems that the greatest motivation for Les Nichols was notoriety and profit in sharing his story. I don't see that it served the "community," if there truly is such a thing, because *Hustler* magazine is not a respected journal of mainstream society. It doesn't influence the political or medical professions. Its purpose is to provide entertainment to those who enjoy the unusual and unique and unclothed in a kind of elementary way and turn as handsome a profit as possible. When we talk about media-exploiters, I don't see any better example than the *Hustler* article. Nichols has the right to sell his story if he chooses, but I don't have to defend him. He is not representing me or anything that I believe in, with the exception of free enterprise.

David Miller
Sacramento, California

FTM Newsletter

Exclusively for the female-to-male crossdresser and transsexual.
Published quarterly since 1986 by
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San Francisco, California

Dear *FTM*:

This letter is in response to some remarks made by Andrew [redacted] in "FTMs Meet in England." This article appeared in the June 1990 issue of *FTM*. To be fair to the author, I have to say that I've also read similar comments in many other places.

In the middle of a good and informative piece, [redacted] commented that he was disappointed that there were people at an FTM meeting "who still lived as women or who hadn't changed over and still looked distinctly like women, or more precisely like butch lesbians." The author went on to say that it didn't bother him if people thought he was a gay man, but "it does if people consider me to be a lesbian because I'm TS."

I'm a butch lesbian who has introduced many other women to gender play. I've had many friends and lovers who fall at different points along that spectrum the shrinks call "gender dysphoria." This includes women who want to cross-dress as men solely during sexual play, women who live some of the time as men and some of the time as women, butch dykes like myself who are sometimes mistaken for men, FTMs who take hormones but have no surgery, and FTMs who are planning on having varying types of surgery when they can afford it. Thus far, I've not had a lover or friend who had completed "gender reassignment," unless you count my correspondence with Lou Sullivan.

I've lost track of how many times I've taken my friends shopping for their first male clothing, made somebody a dildo harness or prosthetic penis they could wear in their pants and taught them how to fuck or piss using these devices, copied off my entire set of *FTM* and other reading, sat through telephone calls late at night when somebody was despondent or suicidal, bound someone's breasts down, given somebody their hormone shot, told somebody it was OK to use the men's room, encouraged my rowdier or more self-destructive friends to adopt more positive male role models, etc.

I admit that [redacted]'s remarks made me wonder why I've bothered. Many people write to *FTM* despairing of the lack of support. [redacted] himself is angry because post-op FTMs are reluctant to attend events and help FTMs who are not fully transformed.

There seems to be a hierarchy, with post-op FTMs at the top, those who've had some surgery on the second rung, those who merely take hormones below them, and of course, gender-dysphoric or butch lesbians are hardly worth mentioning. Post-op FTMs who subscribe to this hierarchy of course feel the same way about [redacted] that he feels about butch dykes.

Need I say that this pisses me off? How dare anyone imply that my identity is any less valid than his own? It has taken me years of hard work and education to accept myself, to find a workable, healthy balance between the negative feelings I have about being born female and my intense sexuality. Given the limitations of surgery, the side-effects of hormones and the fact that it's unlikely that I would "read" as male even after gender reassignment, I have constructed a social and sexual life that lets me have what I want in fantasy without destroying my ability to make a living, have friends, or function in the real world.

There's no mention in [redacted]'s article of the emotional and social risk I and other dykes take when we befriend or bed FTMs. Do you know how many times I've been threatened with violence because I'm out with an FTM? How many times other lesbians have given me shit because I'm bringing "male energy" into women's space? After being a good daddy for so many of you boys, I'm not about to be told that I shouldn't participate in your community. It seems cruel and pointless to make anyone feel unwelcome who is willing to lend support, friendship, and sex to FTMs.

Let's face it, many FTMs come out of the lesbian community and will basically remain there, because that is the environment where they are most likely to find understanding and companionship. The gender reassignment process is far from perfect. There is a lot to be said for stopping short of

irreversible surgery, if that is the point at which you find peace with yourself. Every transsexual has to make a decision about how to regard his own past, but I don't think it's very healthy to deny a lesbian history. You can't criticize feminist lesbians for being anti-transsexual if you secretly feel we are second-rate men and express shame about being in our company.

I know the community of the "differently gendered" is always under attack, so I want to emphasize that I don't intend to trash anyone. I want Andrew [redacted] and everybody who reads *FTM* to have the kind of life, bodies, and sexual partners that will make them happy. But if we don't examine some of our own assumptions and prejudices, we limit the opportunity for personal growth that our difference has given us.

Pat Califia

Dear *FTM*,

I am the coordinator of a support group for intersexed and asexual people. Intersexed people are those who have medical conditions that are known variously as hermaphroditism, pseudo-hermaphroditism, ambiguous genitalia, gonadal dysgenesis, or eunuchism, among others. *Finding Our Own Ways* is a forum for people to explore ways of being ourselves, in a setting free of pressure to define ourselves in terms of maleness or femaleness, and a source of support for asexuality and non-traditional gender identification as legitimate and non-pathological lifestyles. Membership is open to anyone who is asexual, or whose gender is other than male or female, or who wishes to support the group's goals. Contact is primarily by means of our newsletter; sample copy available for \$1.00 plus a self-addressed stamped envelope. Write *Finding Our Own Ways*, P O Box 1545, Lawrence KS 66044.

Sincerely,

Toby

Dear *FTM*,

Here is a new letter from Holland. I have had a lot of reactions from readers of the *FTM* magazine. I have so much letters to write, so I didn't have time to write earlier to you.

If there are some guys who have wrote a letter to me, but who didn't have any reaction, please write me again. Sometimes there will go something wrong with the post. So I received a letter from someone in England who seems to have changed his address. So I'm very sorry if someone takes time to write to me and got no response.

Our group is very interested to hear about the people in other countries. There are a lot of people who are reading the magazine at our meetings because I always will take it with me to a meeting. We have every two months a meeting. A lot of people do think it's not enough when we have meetings every three months.

It's always a great pleasure to see the folks again. The next time we will discuss the item: "Why do we grow old so fast?" This item has my interest because just ten years ago, when I was 25 years, I looked 18 years. Now I am 36 years and I look 36 years old, but I feel like 50 years. I have seen so much in my little world, a lot more than other people of my age. This phenomenon is well-conscious by a lot of people of our group.

How do you feel? Perhaps someone will write about this item? Are there more people who have the feeling to have become a grown-up in a very short time? I'm very anxious to hear from you. I have to send you very kindly greetings from our Mannengroup. Please note the changes in my telephone number.

Jean van Aarle
Mannengroep Nederland
Hemelsbleekweg 10
5425 PB Mortel
The Netherlands
04923-64624

greetings! Got some reviews in your newsletter - loved it - I definitely want to be there at a showing of *Linda/Les & Annie*. I remember your last issue about an Elvis entertainer - great!

I remain very truly yours always
Les Nichols

Dear FTM,

I also wish to defend the controversial Les. While not a fan of "porno" per se, as an artistic and liberal person, my hat is off to Les (and Annie) for having the courage to do the photos and video. We are in an age of repression of artistic expression in this country. With alternative lifestyles only tolerated at best (except the two coasts), we should realize that more extreme statements may bring more awareness that such people exist at all. I deplore expose' sensationalism at the expense of private lives, but these projects were Les' and Annie's choices. We can disassociate ourselves from Les, and remain invisible, but are we so different? Perhaps it is just a matter of degree. As a part-time (though serious) cross-dresser, I am aware of misunderstandings between men and women, sexist remarks, categorizing individuals into boxes to deal with them, instead of communication and dialogue. I hope the "Les/Annie controversy" helps to continue that dialogue, for more acceptance and understanding, no matter how we choose to live.

Francis
Berkeley, Calif.

Dear FTM:

I am quite ferociously compelled to reply to the "No Respect" letter of June 1990, since I'm one of the main people who is being denied respect by its author.

To quote C.B.'s letter, it is true that "medical & educational info on TSism ... is so hard to obtain." That's exactly why it's so fortunate that that issue of *Hustler* (containing clear color photos of phalloplasty, info on our international FTM network, and simple accurate descriptions of all forms of F-M surgery) will be "shelved in nearly every bookstore, newsstand & corner grocer in every town, village & rural route across America as well as ... overseas."

"Imagine some (FTM) striving ... in (one of) these tiny little towns ... and someone slaps the magazine at their face ..." and that poor, isolated TS gets to see a phalloplasty for the first time ever, and says: "Wow! I can have a penis, and there's actually an international support group of people like me, and here's the address and phone number! I'm not the only one, I'm not alone. Now I don't have to kill myself!"

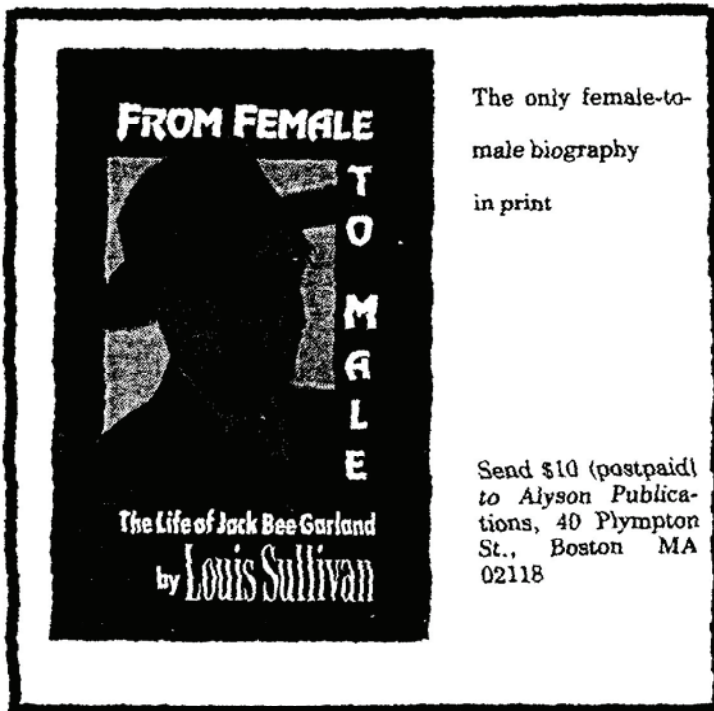
An open-minded TS (obviously not C.B.) takes their referrals where they find them. All outreach (by bona fide resources) is good outreach, the source is completely immaterial! It took me three long, grueling, frustrating, searching years to find one (relatively inaccessible) FTM resource! If I'd seen an article in the easily accessible *Hustler* I could have been on the road a lot sooner!

So, to all of you wrong-headed judgmental idiots who choose to actively criticize the *Hustler* article, or the *Linda/Les & Annie* video, or anyone, anywhere, who comes out of any closet to speak their own personal truth ... be warned. You'll have me to deal with, and I am a self-righteous crusader for the rights of all sexual minorities, for sexual freedom, and for free speech! And I will fight tooth-and-nail, with every resource at my disposal, to prove you wrong! To those who agree, please take a moment to write in!

Working for my comrades, world-wide,
John Armstrong

MTF JAN MORRIS LECTURES IN S.F. Author of "Conundrum"

Male-to-female and Grand Dame in the transsexual community, Jan Morris, who wrote the classic *Conundrum* in 1974, will be the guest speaker at a literary event sponsored by the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library. Morris' lecture begins at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, November 14, 1990 at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco. For ticket information, call 415-552-3656.



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NETWORKING COLUMN

I would appreciate very much hearing from any FTM who has gone through metaoidioplasty (one-stage genitoplasty) done by Drs. Laub, Gilbert, Brownstein, or any competent surgeon. Thanks for any assistance you can give me. Michael Butera, 1590 Thayer Dr., Blue Bell PA 19422.

#

Attractive, safe, well-balanced, warm, considerate WM wishes to meet a genetic female who is very muscular and hairy and who is comfortable with themselves. An FTM TS (pre-op) would be welcome. My objective is a monogamous relationship involving friendship, love, romance and more. Bearded FTM is particularly appreciated. P O Box 1456, Orinda CA 94563.

#

FTM, post surgery complete looking for like-minded friends, companions and perhaps a partner. Very active spiritually, outdoorsy, with stable job while striving to bud the songwriter musician in me. Addiction recovery conscious. Write P O Box 14824, Fremont CA 94539-1824.

#

Maryland FTM wishes to contact/meet other FTM/MTF's in Maryland or Virginia area for support/socializing. Please write D. Cogswell, P O Box 644, Stevensville MD 21666.

#

FTM looking for a job in Accounting. Have some experience. Have Acct I & II, Bookkeeping, Intro to Computers, Bus. Management. Looking for job that will train. Please write D. Cogswell, P O Box 644, Stevensville MD 21666.

AND NOW -- A WORD
FROM ANNIE SPRINKLE

Dear Members of the Philadelphia Transsexual Support Group (via *FTM* Newsletter),

I am amazed at your letter expressing outrage and disapproval about the article I wrote about my lover, Les Nichols, in *Hustler* (Feb. 1990). You felt, among other things, that I was "promoting stereotypes and degrading concepts" of transsexuals.

The great writer of lesbian erotica, Pat Califia, once wrote that "When you are dealing with an area as permeated with ignorance and superstition as sex, it is better to be honest than it is to be correct." I live by that, and it is quite often a risk, but one I'm more than willing to take.

My life's work is to research sex; my own sexuality, other people's sexualities, and sex in our society. Then I share my findings and experiences through various mediums, like video, writing, performances, etc. The story I wrote about Les was about my own personal first experience with a female to male transsexual. The way I see it, it was a very honest, playful, erotic, sex positive, informative, loving account. I'm sorry that you don't like it, but I have learned that you can't please everyone. Just like by you being who you are, you can't please everyone. I'm very proud of the story I wrote, and from the letters and response I received, other than yours, many loved it and appreciated it.

The only thing I apologize for is the title "I Love A Woman With A Cock." It wasn't a very good choice. I didn't know as much about female-to-males then as I do now. However, I do admit that I do get very turned on by the idea of women with cocks, so that is where that came from.

I adore Les Nichols. He is a true pioneer, because he accepts both his female and his male sides. He doesn't hide the fact that he was a woman. Although he chose to be a man, he doesn't hate his female side. When he got his phalloplasty the fact that he chose to keep his clitoris and vagina rather than risk losing his orgasm and risk serious medical complications seems a logical compromise, and also very brave. He doesn't hide his dual genitalia, but celebrates them.

Obviously Les is not a "typical" transsexual. I've seen many other F-M's who meet Les really put him down for that. But it seems to me that many of you could really learn a lot from Les, as opposed to trying to make him fit into your idea of what a "politically correct" F-M SHOULD be. Les is definitely "outrageous," and his outrageousness paves the way for you who want to look and feel "normal." But why be normal? Why not be unique? Why not be whomever you are. Why try and make anyone be like you. Les Nichols is on the front lines, often facing rejection and disapproval, even from his own subculture.

I'm always still amazed whenever one sexual minority or persuasion judges another sexual minority or persuasion. Straights judge gays, gays judge straights, straights and gays judge bisexuals. Bisexuals think that everyone is *really* bisexual. Monogamous people judge promiscuous people and vice versa. People who like porn judge people who don't, etc.

I'm amazed that you, who ask for acceptance from society, from your families, do not give it to others. You who ask not to be judged are so busy judging others. If you want acceptance, then you had better accept others and accept yourself. In my story that I wrote, I simply shared who I was and who I saw Les as. Les loved the story. I shared it with him before it was published to make absolute sure he loved it. I got information from Johnny Armstrong to make it as accurate as I could in terms of F-M's in general. But you just can't please everybody. So, to thyne own self be true.

I've come to see that the biggest problem we have in our society in terms of sexuality and gender is that everyone is judging each other and judging themselves. I suggest we replace judgment with compassion and acceptance of who we are as individuals. Then we can really mature, blossom and grow.

I think what really upset you about my article was not how I presented transsexualism to the general public, but that Les and I are totally free to be ourselves, to enjoy our bodies just as they are, that we are out of ALL closets, that we love sex, are having a heck of a lot of fun, we love each other, and we love to share our excitement and what we learn with others. Perhaps that is confronting some issues for you. But it is in that spirit that Les and I empower ourselves, heal the world, and endure.

I send you my best wishes.

Politically incorrect and happy,
Annie Sprinkle

LINDA/LES & ANNIE

Review by Kris/Kevin

This is an excellent video, it is something totally unique. I think it would be helpful for anyone who is stuck somewhere along the gender continuum, or seeking insight into a lifelong dysphoria. The video seems to glint back and forth between basically four segments: (1) Annie writing in her diary (about meeting a man she is very attracted to, and then finding out he used to be a woman); (2) Les, fully clothed, speaking about what it is like to have changed his gender, the differences in privilege, comfortability, etc.; (3) Les and Annie making love with Les' \$50,000 lower surgery; and (4) descriptions and drawings/photographs of the surgical process that created Les' penis. Interspersed with the dialogue is an original musical composition written by Johnny A. - a percussive, reggae-inspired lyric about guess what? Right. Changing gender.

This action-packed film moved right along and was approximately 1/2 hour in length. Although it has been several months since I watched *Linda/Les & Annie*, parts of it remain embedded upon my consciousness. The boyish honesty, for instance, as Les admitted that he gets a lot more privilege being a man than he ever did as a woman - even an implication that this figured into his decision somehow. And, the low self-esteem which often characterizes female-to-male transsexuals is something else which I remember Les talking about. Another thing which stuck in my mind is the feeling that Les chose the *right* surgery(s) for himself.

He values physical sensation, so he left those parts of himself intact which are loaded with erogenous zones (including his large breast nipples). It's a different decision than somebody else might make. Surgical decisions are intensely personal, imperfect dilemmas. Compromises.

The interaction between himself and Annie was very loving and very sexual - I especially noticed that she seemed oblivious to his somewhat scarred appearance (both the chest and penis looked a bit ragged). She responded from a heart place, a bisexual place, and seemed to feel that she had the best of both worlds in Les - that he was somebody who knew what it felt like to be a woman, and at the same time was a sexy guy who could satisfy her without simultaneously oppressing her. This appreciation seems like a gift in a way, and something which was beautiful to watch. Also, watching Les unleash his masculinity, so to speak, was equally fascinating.

I'm aware of the fact that this video has been the object of a lot of discussion in the TS community (a lot of it negative), so I am especially conscious of presenting in a good way what I feel is a highly creative, innovative and sensitive portrayal of someone's discovery of his sexual energy (and his penis). I think that the risk-taking and ground-breaking nature of the video is a natural target for criticism. Controversy is the fore-runner of awareness, and this is something greatly needed in our community.

An historic event occurred on July 14, 1990, when *FTM* editor Lou Sullivan went to visit family and friends in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and arranged for a Midwest FTM Get-Together while there.

Eight FTM's attended, one driving almost 400 miles from Iowa, others coming from Madison and Illinois. It was a pleasure to meet two FTM's from Chicago who are lovers, and one FTM who is employed as a male policeman!

The group clustered around the VCR to watch the video *Linda/Les and Annie*, and we were all surprised when, giving each other moral support, Lou's mother and Brian's mother (who accompanied him to the Get-Together) sat through the whole thing, too.

Some names and addresses were exchanged and hopefully our brothers from the Midwest will continue to keep in contact with each other. We all know how important it is to know others like ourselves, especially in those isolated parts of the country.

SEATTLE GATHERING ENTERTAINS



Maggie Bloodstone, Susan Finque, and Jason Cromwell of Seattle

The F-M Gathering held in Seattle September 2, 1990 was a big success, with sixteen female-to-males and four guests attending. Lou Sullivan, editor of *FTM*, flew up for the occasion and used his cane to get around. Entertainment for the evening consisted of Susan Finque performing excerpts from her play "T.S./Crossing." Finque's movements at times were reminiscent of Mummenshantz (the Swiss mime troupe), silently juxtaposing male and female gestures. "T.S./Crossing" has been performed in Buffalo, Toronto, San Diego, Los Angeles, Edmonton, and a tentative Spring 1991 performance in New York City. Finque has also been invited to perform in Atlanta. The evening's entertainment also included a male impersonation act by Maggie Bloodstone, who lip-synched and danced, imitating rock star David Byrne, formerly of the Talking Heads. The piece was amusing, though Bloodstone could have done a better job with her costuming.

Dear *FTM*,

I would like to add my voice to the commentary concerning the Les Nichols controversy.

I have never heard Les claim to be a role model or representative of the TS/TG community. It is completely illogical to place any one person in such a position as well unfair. If someone chooses to see Les as such, however, that would be only the individual's perception and not factual circumstance.

To condemn Les for being who and what he is (i.e., a "surgically-made hermaphrodite") and make him the object of scorn as such serves no purpose. Are we, as brothers and men, to be judged by the acts of male serial killers, rapists and other undesirable males? I would hope not. Just as it is not realistic to see all men as violent, it is not realistic to see Les as the definitive TS/TG representative/role model.

What is done is done. We cannot begin to second-guess the decisions made by the medical professionals in Massachusetts regarding Les' treatment. While we may not agree with, like, or even "approve" of the reasons for his surgery, not one of us has the right to condemn him for what has happened. Rather, the medical community should be questioned.

What Les did in regard to the video and *Hustler* magazine was his own decision. No one forced him to do either. The fact that the majority of the mail he received was hateful and vicious merely indicates that, among other things, the readers either did not understand the article, were threatened by Les, or both, that they reacted in the manner of those who are insecure regarding sexuality and/or gender identity. Just as those people who are homophobic may be insecure regarding their affectional preference, those who "hate," "condemn," or "deride" Les may not be sure of their gender identities.

As for my own stance on this issue, I cannot say that I agree with or understand all of the reasons for Les' particular journey in life, but it is his right to follow whatever pathway he feels he must. Personally, I resent it when someone tells me where I must be in society to be acceptable/normal, or what I must believe, not to mention *who* I must be.

What Les has done is good in two ways. First, he has come forward and presented himself to a segment of the public which may not have been conversant with the issue of transsexualism. Second, he is rather flamboyant and, as such, it is not as likely that other members of the community will be "read" as transsexuals.

From my own experience, I do not understand what the "male privilege" Les has spoken of is. I know that I feel more at peace and comfortable since finding out who and what I am, and that there is an answer to gender dysphoria. The new-found "respect" he has found is not new to me; it has always existed for me, at least within the business world.

I think that we must learn to accept others as they are, not as we may want them to be. It is important that we educate society; I doubt that the majority of those persons reading the article in *Hustler* were truly interested in anything except titillation. I was struck by the hostility, fear and frustration in the responses printed in *Hustler*. Many of these readers are, after all, the same people who rent or own "she-male" videos (the twisted logic may be that it is acceptable for a "male" to have breasts if he retains his penis, while it is unacceptable for a "female" to have a penis constructed, whether or not she retains her clitoris and vagina). The attitude of a "woman

continued on next page

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE FUTURE ISSUES OF "FTM" ?

WRITE TO US AT: 1827 Haight Street #164, San Francisco CA 94117

LINDA/LES & ANNIE

by William A. Henkin

LINDA/LES & ANNIE: THE FIRST FEMALE-TO-MALE LOVE STORY. Les Nichols and Annie Sprinkle. 35 mins., \$68

... if I were trapped in that cage again nothing would keep me from my goal, however fearful its prospect, however hopeless the odds. I would search the earth for surgeons, I would bribe barbers or abortionists, I would take a knife and do it myself, without fear, without qualms, without a second thought.

— Jan (nee James) Morris, in *Conundrum*

Goddess bless Annie Sprinkle. God bless Les Nichols. Let me explain.

In *Linda/Les and Annie: The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story*, porn educator Annie Sprinkle undertakes to teach her viewers about the relatively rare, but increasingly familiar, concern of female-to-male transsexualism. As she usually does, she fulfills her mission with compassion, humor, insight, and the pleasures of her own discovery. As she usually does not, she has for this video the assistance of Les Nichols, her lover since last summer.

Les (nee Linda) Nichols is a man who was a female. On camera he explains how as a female he had been a radical separatist feminist lesbian who could not stand even to be in the same room with a man, and how now as a man he recognizes sympathetic positions for both sexes. He reports being very happy with his sex change, and his dancing eyes and joyous behavior for the duration of this video give every indication that he speaks the truth.

On camera, also, Annie inaugurates Les into heterosexual intercourse. They first use a teflon rod and later use Les' thumb to enable the hollow flesh tube that is now Les' penis to work as an erection. Then, since Les is actually a surgically created hermaphrodite, with Linda's external genitals intact, Les demonstrates the ways he now uses both his male and his female sex organs. Annie uses their happy suckfuck to educate viewers about the two surgical procedures that allow someone who was a female to have a penis — genitoplasty and phalloplasty — accompanying her explanations with drawings on paper and on a human body.

In the shower, on the bed, or on her Impressionist rambles in the woods, Annie is no dry academic. She giggles with voluptuous pleasure at the knowledge that she is Les' best fuck — since she is his first — and notes that fucking a man who can frig his own clit is a first for her as well.

At the end of the tape, of course, Les rides off into the sunset on his motorcycle, the very picture of an independent macho man — except for the amused glint in his eye.

This review was originally published in Spectator and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author.

LINDA LES & ANNIE



The First Female-to-Male Transsexual Love Story

A 30-minute video docu-drama

Regularly \$68, but the tape is available to FTM members for \$25.

Linda/Les & Annie, 132 West 24th Street, New York NY 10011

.....
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continued

with a penis" (female-to-male transsexual) is threatening to many medical professionals; why, then, should it surprise us that *Hustler* readers or those who purchase the video may react the same way?

If any of our fraternal brotherhood, so offended by what Les has done, can afford to come forward and open up to the world at large and provide a more positive role model, would he please do so, and soon? If it is not a possibility for us (as it is not for me), perhaps this indicates that we need to have more "normal" or "mainstream" people come forward with the backing of medical professionals. Until that time, however, it may be left to such as Les Nichols to be the trail-blazers within the female-to-male community.

It has been my experience that when we are disturbed by another person and/or his/her behavior, perhaps it is because we see the same or a similar trait or habit within ourselves which we dislike.

Again, I may not agree with or even understand Les Nichols' motivation, but I feel that I do not have the right to condemn him. I can only try to accept him and find out what aspects, if any, bother me — *why*.

Very truly yours,
C. W.
Bronx, New York

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WHEN IT'S SAFE ENOUGH TO TELL THE TRUTH, FREEDOM CAN FOLLOW.



STORME: THE LADY OF THE JEWEL BOX

On August 29th, several FTM members took advantage of a rare opportunity to see the 21-minute film, directed by Michelle Parkerson in 1987, entitled *Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box*. Storme DeLarverie, 66 at the time the film was made, was the emcee and only male impersonator with the legendary Jewel Box Revue, where crossdressers performed from 1955 to 1969. "I model myself after me," Storme boasted.

F-M GROUP FORMING IN SACRAMENTO

The F-M community in Sacramento is joining to form an informal rap/support/social group. We are planning monthly meetings and a quarterly newsletter. If you would like to find out more about the meeting dates and locations, write to: FTM Forum, P O Box 215354, Sacramento CA 95821.

MALE IMPERSONATOR FEATURED IN LESBIAN MAGAZINE

Shelly Mars, who created the male impersonation act featured in Monika Treut's film *The Virgin Machine* and recreated in the new video *BurLEZk Live II*, is featured as the cover photo in her character, 'Martin,' and is interviewed inside the pages of the risqué lesbian magazine *On Our Backs*, July/August 1990. The issue has four quality photos of 'Martin.' "Martin is such an asshole but he loves himself so much," Mars says. "He's kind of likable in a sick way because his ego is so big, sometimes you've got to give him credit for that. This little shrimp guy that has to be hot shit." Asked why she changed her mind and agreed to bring Martin' out in public, Mars explained, "I wanted to be a performer in the mainstream and to please everybody. Then I realized, 'Who am I anyway?' I've always thought of myself as a black homosexual trapped in a lesbian's body! Now I'm working on this gender thing where the actual costume is half man/half woman. I'll be going from gay man to straight man to gay girl to straight girl by just turning the side of my face." Order *On Our Backs* by sending \$6 to 526 Castro St., San Francisco CA 94114.

October 3rd, the front pages of both San Francisco newspapers reported that San Francisco police had arrested a 34-year-old FTM on charges of threatening to kill members of the Board of Supervisors. Lynn Falske, sporting a thick beard, was held on six felony counts of terrorist threats and two felony counts of possession of prohibited weapons. Police found a .38-caliber gun, an Uzi machine gun, more than 100 rounds of ammunition and two pairs of brass knuckles in his apartment. The district attorney said Falske was being held on \$500,000 bail in the women's section of the San Francisco County Jail. Falske is not known to our San Francisco FTM group.

HIDDEN: A GENDER ON NATIONWIDE TOUR



"As to being a man or a woman, must you be one or the other?" So speaks playwright Kate Bornstein in her satirical view of the social, medical and personal constructions of gender identity, told in an amusing and moving variety of theatrical styles. Don't miss this wonderful play when it comes to your area! Here's the itinerary:

September 30: Benefit performance for Harvey Gantt (who is running opposite the repressive Senator Jesse Helms in North Carolina), Life on the Water, Fort Mason Center, 3:30 p.m. For info, call 885-2790.

October 31-November 1: George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia (near Washington, D.C.)

November 5: Brown University, Providence, R.I.

November 9: Hallwalls Theater, Buffalo NY

November 9 through 20: Tentatively in Toronto; Tufts University in Boston; and Fairfield College in Fairfield CT.