

THE SURGEON WHO CHANGES MEN INTO WOMEN

'We do our best to put nature's mistakes right'

From PAUL HUGHES
Casablanca, Morocco
A FEW minutes' drive from the crowded alleys of the Casbah is the luxury clinic of Dr. Georges Burou.

In contrast to the melee in the street market, where veiled Arab women barter with tradesmen, all is peace and calm in the clinic off the fashionable Boulevard Prince Moulay Hassan II.

The Clinic du Parc occupies three floors of the modern building overlooking the palms of this international city.

There are two operating theatres, 20 private wards. In each ward there is a decorated white bed, floral curtains—and a draped crib.

It was here that former seaman April Ashley was operated on ten years ago to become a woman.

The entrance to 13.

© Sunday Mirror, 1970.

Rue Capitaine de la Frigate Lapebie, is impressive; a pink stone facade, white marble steps, the glass doors protected by a white painted grille of Moorish design.

Thousands of men, like April Ashley, have walked through that grilled door to be patients in the past fifteen years.

Most left a fortnight later, happily convinced that they were women.

The decision of Mr. Justice Ormrod, who declared during Miss Ashley's divorce action in the London High Court that she is still legally a man, affects them all.

Happiness

DR. BUROU is the world's leading authority on the type of sex operations he performs. In his blue-tiled operating theatre on the third floor of his establishment he told me:

"The law is the law, but when it does not take people's feelings

into account perhaps the law is wrong.

"I don't remember Miss Ashley in particular. It was a long time ago and I have done so many similar operations since then. But I know how she must feel as a result of the judge's decision.

"Every human being has the right to try to find happiness, and if people like Miss Ashley can find happiness by living and working as women, why shouldn't they?"

Sitting on his blue-covered operating table, under the glare of a giant lamp, Dr. Burou described the operation. It was easy to feel the anguish of the many men who had submitted to amputation, under his skilled fingers, of the unwanted appendages of manhood.

Dr. Burou told me in rapid French: "I have perfected a method I invented myself. After removing the penis and testicles I provide the patient with a vaginal

cavity without taking skin from other parts of the body.

"It is a great advance in this sort of surgery. What can lawyers know about the motives that make people dream of having this operation?"

The doctor is a gynaecologist—a specialist in women's illnesses and childbirth. His pretty blonde wife, Lisa, the clinic's director, told me: "It is because my husband knows so much about women that he can perform this operation on men."

Flowers

THE doctor and I walked along the quiet rubber-floored corridors. Each door we passed was painted with a different flower—a lily, a rose, a tulip.

Inside, each room was decorated in pastel tints with the colour and motif of the flower.

"We have so many people from all over the world who cannot speak a common language that we put flowers on the doors as well as numbers. And the flowers make the patients happy too," said Dr. Burou.

"They like pretty things. What woman doesn't?"

We stopped at a door painted with a yellow marguerite. The doctor paused, his hand on the door knob. "Inside

are two patients who were operated on about a week ago. You tell me if you think they resemble men.

I saw a pretty, dark-haired girl lying in bed wearing a pink nightie. Beside her sat another girl with ginger hair in long plaits, and wearing tight-fitting bikini pants.

"Good afternoon, Mademoiselle," said the doctor. "Are you well today?" The patient smiled and nodded.

In French the doctor told me: "You see. They are really girls, are they not? They look like girls and think like girls."

The patients were friends from New York who saved up the fare of \$80 dollars (about £158) each for a twenty-one-day excursion to Casablanca. They also saved the 2,000 to 3,000 dollars (about £333 to £1,249) for the operation and after-care in the clinic.

Dream

WHEN the two friends travel back to America they will be able to do so as legally recognised women. Under American law they can have their passports changed to show their sex as "Female."

They made the journey together to give each other courage. The dark-haired one told me: "I have lived as a woman for five years and worked as a secretary. I use the name Lydia."

"I dreamed of having this operation and, now it's done, I don't care what the law says. I'm so happy."

Ginger-haired "Candy" toiled with her plaits, her long, silver-painted fingernails moving nervously: "I worked as a Go-Go dancer in a topless club. I guess nature always meant me to be a girl, and no judge can change that now. I'm certainly not a man."

Natural

NEITHER sex-change girl understood French. As he discreetly examined them, Dr. Burou kept up a commentary in that language.

"You see, they both have a marked feminine aspect. No beard. No body hair on the chest and legs. No need to shave at all. And both have rounded hips and fine breasts, which developed naturally without drugs or surgery."

Notice the fine texture of the skin. The fine hands, the gestures, the long, silky hair. To all intents and purposes they were women before I operated on them. Now they can really feel that they are women.

"The English judge has made a very hard law. The problem exists, one cannot shut one's eyes to it."

"Man makes laws, but the good Lord makes individuals. And even nature makes mistakes sometimes. We human beings must do our best to put them right, if necessary with surgery."

Dr. Burou's surgical operation is drastic. He showed me enlarged photographs of each stage of the operation.



TIME TO LOOK AHEAD

Beside every bed—a crib to give patients a psychological boost. Now Candy, left, and Lydia plan their future...

Pictures by EDWARD SANDERSON

BALDNESS STOPS HERE!

pay thousands of dollars to see these pictures, so that they could know exactly how I do it," he claimed.

"After the operation it is possible for the patient to experience complete fulfilment, including orgasm, during intercourse with a normal man, using the vaginal cavity I have constructed."

"The operation used to take me two hours, but now I am able to perform it in about one hour."

"Six to eight weeks after the operation, the patient can use her new vagina fully. But, of course, she can never bear children."

"Many of these transsexual patients would love to have children, but the adoption rules are difficult for them."

ished apartment above the clinic.

"I only perform this operation on people with marked feminine characteristics," he said.

"I turn away many people if I am not satisfied they have a feminine aspect and appearance."

"Recently a very strongly-masculine man asked me to operate on him. It was very odd. Naturally I refused."

Tragic

PRETTY blonde Madame Burou lit a cigarette and told me: "We have at least two applications a day for the sex change operation. They come from all over the world."

"This week we have done three operations. Last week we did four. "All over the world there are these people who feel so tragic because they are mentally and

psychologically women, but have the characteristics of a male body. It is tragic when laws are made against them."

"A couple of months after the operation here, our young women could have examinations by doctors in their home countries who would probably not notice they had ever been men."

"We alter their silhouette to suit their mentality, that's all. This talk about male and female chromosomes is very scientific, but if you met any of our young ladies at, say, a dance you would accept them as women. You would not examine their chromosomes."

Madame Burou produced bulky files containing hundreds of letters, accompanied by pictures of pretty girls.

looking shop girls, secretaries and clerks.

"They were all men. All had sent photographs with their applications for amputation."

The letters told a world-wide story of tragedy and hope.

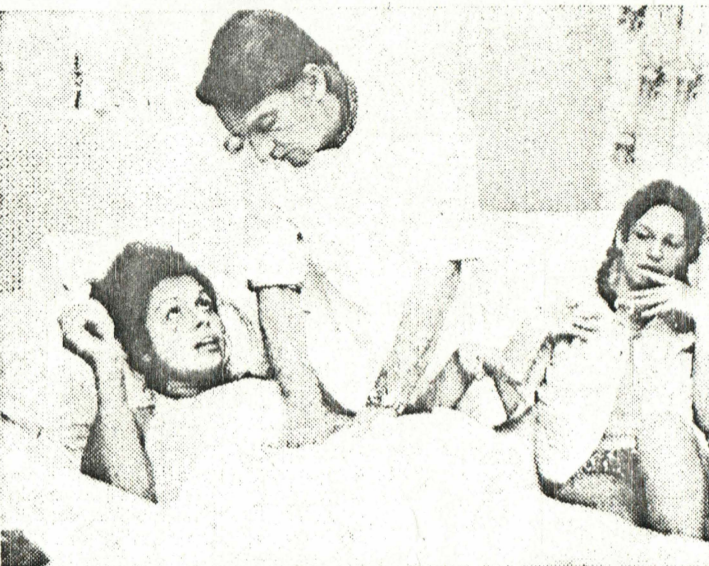
Decision

DR. BUROU said: "It would have been better, perhaps, if the English judge had not needed to make any judgment on Miss Ashley. The decision will cause so much unhappiness to many, many people like her in Britain whose lives have already been so tragic."

"The law would be better to leave them alone, and allow them to live as they want."

TIME TO BE KINDLY

Assurance from Dr. Georges Burou for Lydia, who recently underwent a sex change operation at the clinic.



TIME TO RELAX

Chain-smoking Dr. Burou finds time for an occasional joke with his staff.

