



# TRANSCENDING GENDER...

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# My Sex Change in Brussels

by *Lausdit Nurop*  
(an obvious pseudonym)

I lived in Europe for a time when I was a child, and I visited with a lover in the early 1980s, but this time my travel was for a very specific and exciting purpose: I was having sex reassignment surgery in Belgium.

No doubt by now I have your attention

I'm in my early fifties. I was born and lived the first 49 years of my life as a male, but I've been functioning in society as a woman for nearly two years now. Electrolysis and female hormones have given me a viable feminine appearance. At work, in line at the post office and grocery store, in my recreational activities, and even on dates, no one ever suspected that I was not always a woman.

My little badge of male-ness was not even particularly embarrassing, as no one ever saw it, but it was there, and it bothered me when I stood naked in front of the mirror. It was a thing that obviously didn't belong. And having it was interfering with my love life. "John, dear, there's something I've been meaning to tell you...."

In checking out sex reassignment surgery, I found

that the quality and price varies widely. It was available right here in the good old USA, and maybe even in Atlanta, but at a high cost.

Some of the best surgery of the world was being done in Belgium for only \$4000, which seemed a ridiculously low fee. I checked on the qualifications of a surgeon, and, when the returns were

positive, I wrote him and made an appointment.

And so there I was, flying to the Continent, in the company of an extremely tall woman named Alison, who had the same anatomy problem as me. Each of us had the surgeon's fee in our purse. Each was excited, for we had worked and saved for a long time in order to get to this place. We were the elite, for most transsexual people, for one reason or another — fear, finances, health, procrastination — do not have surgery. You'd be surprised how many women there are out there, walking around with male equipment, and men with female equipment.

Brussels was having a rare hot spell when we arrived on Friday evening. It was much worse than Atlanta. We found our hotel, and spent the next 36 hours trying to get over the jet lag.

We saw the surgeon on Sunday morning. He gave us a rudimentary inspection, in order to determine what he had to work with (the scrotal and penile skin is used to line the vagina). Then he sent us on our way, with instructions to check into the clinic at 2:30 p.m. the next day.

Things happened quickly on Monday. We checked

out of the hotel, had lunch and dragged our suitcases, their wheels protesting, across the cobblestone sidewalks to the clinic. Once there, we met the anesthesiologist, had EKG and chest x-rays, blood was drawn, and enema given. Then, we were handed a razor and told to shave our pubic areas. I'd never done that (although Alison, who is notoriously kinky, had). It's hard to see down there. A nurse was good enough to finish up for me.

After supper we were given a sleeping pill. It was plenty potent. The next thing I knew, it was morning, and Alison was being wheeled out of the room. I rolled over and went back to sleep, waking only when my own bed was on the way down the hall. I spoke groggily to the anesthesiologist, and watched her start to push the plunger to inject sodium pentothal into the IV she had started.

I awoke in the recovery room, some hours later, with an oxygen tube in my nose. I was thirsty, and asked (in French) for water.

I kept waking and dozing for the rest of the day. It was harder to sleep on the second day. It felt as if a pony were standing, and maybe even dancing, on my groin.

I was able to move about on the bed in a limited way, and even get involved in Stephen King's "The Stand," which my boyfriend had given me for Christmas, and I had been saving for just this purpose.

My recovery was rapid. I was uncomfortable, but never in what I would call unbearable pain. It was a different story with Alison, who shared the room with me. She screamed, cried and cursed, at one point throw-

ing her coffee pot against the wall to get the attention of the nurses, who weren't bringing her pain reliever fast enough to suit her.

On the fourth day, I toddled down the hall with her so she could call her Mommie at 3:00 a.m. US time, to cry and ask to come home. Alison made it difficult to rest. I finally had enough, and, as she was whimpering and crying after a nightmare (I'm not a Freudian, but it seemed to have castration symbolism), I asked her to please suffer in peace so I could get some sleep.

The surgeon had recently switched hospitals, so the nurses were not really familiar with transgendered people. My French is poor, but it was enough for simple conversations. I showed them my notorious "before" photos (I used to wear a



## GENDER CONFERENCE

The South's first major gender event, *Southern Comfort*, is slated for Oct. 3 - 6. Sponsored by Sigma Epsilon and the Montgomery Institute, the four-day conference will be packed with activities including workshops, banquets and field trips with separate programs for crossdressers and transsexuals.

Special guests include renowned make-up artist Jim Bridges who will be conducting classes, consultations and makeovers, Dr. Peggy Rudd, author of "My Husband Wears My Clothes" and "Crossdressing With Dignity," plus David and Deborah Gilbert from the Center For Gender Reassignment in Norfolk, Va. In addition, the keynote speaker is Dr. Sheila Kirk.

*Southern Comfort* is being held at the Ramada Dunwoody Conference Center (formerly the Dunwoody Hotel), 1850 Catillion Dr. (Exit #22). For room reservations call either 1-800-628-3328 or 404-394-5000.

Registration begins at noon Thurs., Oct. 3, and 9:00 a.m. on both Fri. and Sat. The cost for the complete conference is \$200, including many meals or \$165 for Fri., Sat. and Sun.

For more information contact the Atlanta Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS) at 404-939-0244.



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beard), and a scatological letter, in French, sent to me by a Quebecois friend (they showed it to all of the doctors). I even joked with the young Moroccan ladies who cleaned the room, who asked me what kind of surgery I had. "Changement du sexe," I told them; they didn't bat an eye.

Alison and I were discharged on the sixth day after surgery. The continuing presence of a balloon in my bladder kept me in bed at the hotel for most of the next two days, but when the doctor removed the catheter, I hit the ground running, spending most of the remaining four days drying to see all of Brussels. I walked and walked, avoiding the usual tourist attractions, concentrating instead on the areas where the natives go. Forsaking my ongoing diet, I ate as much as possible of the rich Belgian food. I flirted with men, wondering what they would say if I told them, in my broken French, about the swollen and strange sex toy the good doctor had given me.

At one point, I found myself riding around Brussels in a 4x4 with a transsexual Belgian prostitute, seeing the seamy side of the city. I stopped only to return to the motel room to dilate.

Dilation. It's a new fact of life. My custom equipment is indistinguishable from factory-installed, but it does require some extra maintenance. Four times a day for six months, and daily for the rest of my life, I must insert a metal or plastic device into the depths of my new anatomy. Otherwise, the vagina

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## SEX CHANGE

*Continued from page 30*

will lose depth and diameter. As dilation is necessary, then perhaps it shouldn't be called masturbation, but as I find it pleasurable, then perhaps it should.

Alison spent the same four days in the motel room, emerging only when driven forth by hunger, and, not dilating enough. Alison, with her gang rape fantasies, is going to be disappointed when things close up, and she no longer has the equipment usually considered necessary for such activities.

All too soon, we were jetting on SwissAir back to Atlanta. At customs at Hartsfield, Alison decided she was unable to walk, and we had to find a wheelchair for her. I was light on my feet, trying to look like I hadn't had surgery, too. A female customs agent said to her, "I won't even ask what kind of surgery you had."

"You'd be surprised," I told her.

"No, I wouldn't," she replied, looking at the black fuzz which covered Alison's unshaven chin.

It's been two-and-a-half weeks since the operation. I've been back at work for three days, and my gynecologist took the rest of my stitches out today. Life is back to Atlanta normal, hot and humid, with traffic backed up on I-285. But, I now have female genitalia — and, having once been married to a woman, I assure you that it is the real thing.

In another month, I can, if I so desire, start to have sex. And I just might, for sex counts as a dilation. ▼