

An Unforeseen Journey



A "New Woman" Novel



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By: Heather Berdrow

Over the last several years, I have found myself drawn to stories of the transgender plight. The articles depicting their journey from secret lives to fully out into society. The travels they take from self-hatred, to self-acceptance, only to discover hate and rejection from family and friends, and society in general.

But I think my story is as different from theirs as night is to day. I have become something I could never have dreamed of even in my darkest nightmares. Please bear with me as I travel my own road. A road with many dips and inclines, as well as rocks and other assorted debris, all placed in front of me, asking the question, "Will this be your downfall? Will your soul contract onto itself, leaving only a shell? Will you end up broken and shallow, with nothing left of yourself?" You can be the judge. I know who and what I am, and I am damn proud of the end result.

For my own peace of mind, I guess laying down a foundation will help you understand the start of my life, the middle, and where we are now. I was born to a traditional upper mid-west family unit. I had loving parents, Stan and Carol Gray. I have two older sisters, Sarah and Gina, and bringing up the rear was my little brother, Brian. I was number three in line, and my name was

Timothy.

When I say traditional, I am sure all sorts of things come to mind, but I am referring to the gender roles. Pink is for girls and blue is for boys. It was that simple. Dolls and dresses for the girls, trucks and jeans for the boys. The lines sat down were never to be crossed. I guess I was about six or seven when I began to notice the fairer sex. Before that time, girls were, put simply, just yucky.

The girls seemed to gravitate to my Mom. She helped them with cooking, sewing, and fashions. As they grew older, makeup and hair styling was next. On the other hand, the boys belonged to my father. He took us to sporting events, camping and hiking, even fishing off his tiny aluminum boat, where we learned patience, waiting for the fish to start biting. We spent a lot of time in Dad's shop. He had converted the garage into his work area, and showed us how to use each and every piece of equipment, and every tool he had. We all spent hours upon hours with our parents, learning girl and boy things.

My big epiphany came when I was about nine. Gina, who by this time was about twelve, wanted most of all to be considered grown up. She knew everything, and wasn't afraid to let anyone else be uneducated about that. Just as a footnote, Mom could control her brood with just a look. You know the one, we all do. It was an unspoken rule that if you came dangerously close to

getting on her bad side, she would glare at you, turning your blood to ice. My Dad was more of the corporal punishment disciple. A good sound spanking could cure any type of misbehavior.

This one particular afternoon, Gina had made plans to spend some time with her girlfriends at the local mall. Of course she had to dress just a certain way or her life would be over before it even started. When my Mom saw what she was wearing, a very short skirt, moderate heels, and a belly baring tee shirt that left very little to the imagination, she folded her arms, gave her “The look,” and pointed Gina back to her room. After Mom had turned around, Gina stuck her tongue out, and stamped her foot. What Gina didn’t realize is that Dad was sitting back, watching the whole scene as it played out, right in front of him. I never saw Dad moved so fast before. He had Gina by the arm, and not so gently tossed her across his lap. He raised her tiny little skirt, lowered her panties, and began to warm her backside but good. When he was done, he directed a sobbing Gina to fix herself up, dry her eyes, and go apologize to her mother for such a display of bad manners.

Of course growing up, I saw my sisters in all states of dress and undress. But seeing Gina’s firm round bottom, with her panties down around her knee’s, really had a strong effect on me. I don’t think I looked at a girl after that day in the same way anymore. Once I reached my teens, I was always on the prowl, hoping to

catch the sight of a panty covered bottom, or young growing breasts contained in a silky or lacy bra's. If I remember correctly, that night, as I tried to go to sleep, that afternoons dramatics' played over and over again. I found that I was getting harder by the second. All I did was touch myself, and I had my first real orgasm. Boy, did it make a mess, but it sure felt good.

It seemed that life was so different after that, for me and my family. I think I was in my freshman year of high school. My sisters were out shopping, and my brother was at a friend's for a sleepover. I was in my room working on a science project, when I heard my parents talking, and my Mom sobbing between sentences. Before long, I heard the front door shut, and I went to investigate what had happened. Not once, during my time at home, did my Mom and Dad fight, so this was all very new to me. I had heard my friends talk about their parent's battles, but that was not the case at our house. When I peeked into my parents' bedroom, I saw my mother with her face in her hands, crying. When she raised her head, she saw me in the doorway, and waved me into her room. She then hugged me like never before. "What's wrong, Mom? I heard you and Dad talking. Are you all right?" I asked when she released me.

"Yes son, I am okay. Your father needed to work on a few things, and didn't feel like he could do it here. But he wanted you, me, and the other kids to know that he loves us, with all his heart. But that there are some things that even love can't cure," she

sobbed. "You are now the man of the house, and I will need your help." By this time, I too, was crying. My Dad, gone? Why was all I could think about? I told my Mom that whatever she needed, I would do all I could. By later that evening, my sisters and brother had all been told of the severe changes that had taken place. And like me, they too cried, but promised to help wherever they could.

With Dad gone, Mom decided she needed to go back to work. Within days she was working as a sales rep in the downtown department store. The turnover rate there was very high, so in only months, Mom was promoted to department supervisor. Things were very tight for a while, and we had to make some serious sacrifice's to make ends meet. We all did without things that we all had taken for granted, but in the end, I think it made us better and stronger.

In many ways, I was just like my Dad. Neither of us was very big, in fact we were both of average height and weight, but we were wiry. Something that I had developed over the past couple of years was a gigantic chip on my shoulder. I had found myself on the soccer team, as I was too small to play football or basketball. I wasn't even the star of the team, but I did make my presence known. I was also pretty good looking, so I never seemed to want for a pretty girl on my arm. I started with the cheer and pep squads, and then moved on to more of the general school population. I enjoyed each and every one of them, I just

wasn't ready to settle down with just one. I didn't treat any of them badly, just with a sense of indifference.

I did have something happen during my senior year. We were playing a home game, and we were winning quite handily. The coach wanted to see some of the younger guys play, so he began to substitute for the first team. As I left the field, I saw this very attractive and very well dressed woman and her friend, enter the bleacher area. One was a brunette, one was a blonde. The brunette kept her eyes on me for the longest time. I found myself beginning to fantasize, and then I finally knew what all the guys in the locker room had said about "Cougar's." When I looked up again, they both were gone. I chalked it up to a vivid imagination, and listening to too much locker room trash talk.

As graduation inched closer, I was hoping for a scholarship to play soccer, but sadly, none came. I then thought about community college, but I really wanted something else. To sail the sea's, be an army of one, fly high, or be one of the few and the proud. Since I considered myself a tough guy, I joined the Marines. Only a couple of weeks out of high school, and I found myself on a bus, headed for boot camp. Boy, if I knew then what I know now, I am sure I would have picked an easier road. But now that I have done it and won, I am a better person for it.

Now that boot camp was out of the way, it was on to more training, but a specialized training for one's given skill set. I was

assigned to explosive removal, basically, the bomb squad. I never dreamed there was so much to know, but after my first tour in a hostile area, I knew there was a whole bunch of learning still ahead. My first tour lasted about a year or so, and then it was time to head home. It was really nice to see my Mom, sisters, and brother there at the airport. But something strange happened there as well. As I was hugging my Mom, I swear I saw the same brunette from my soccer game in high school. But just like before, I blinked, and she was gone in an instant. I thought to myself, I really need a vacation.

I was on a thirty days leave, spending time at home. Sarah was now married and expecting her first child. Gina was engaged, but it was to her career choice. She wanted to be a lawyer, and nothing was going to stand in her way. Brian, probably the smartest one of all, had received a scholarship to an Ivy League school, and was spending all of his free time in the astronomy lab. He was working towards being an astrophysicist. Quite a mouthful I would say. When leave was over, I headed for an east coast duty station, somewhere in North Carolina. It was now spring, and the weather was clearing up nicely. My days were filled with more training, as the enemy was always finding new and creative ways to blow us up. So we had to stay one step ahead of them as all times, if that was possible. Initially, the nights were something else entirely. I was never much of a drinker, so going into the local city had little to offer as far as

entertainment. I think there were more bars than people in town. Instead, I went to libraries and museums to stay sane. It was there that I met Melissa. Oh she was so pretty. Long red hair, fair skin, and a ton of freckles. She had all the curves I guy like me could ever want, in all of the right places. After just a few dates, I knew she was the one for me. But before I could take the next step, my crew and I received orders. We were needed back into the enemy zone. The night before we left, Melissa and I talked till the sun came up, and we promised to be there for each other. For the first time since my Dad left, I cried.

My crew and I had been back in country, I'll say for about than a month, when we received a message about a small mine field very near a school and town. By now, I was squad leader, and had been promoted to corporal. My crew included myself and the LT. We then jumped into our Humvee's, and headed for the school and mine field. We were nearly there, and were preparing to do what we do best. The road we were on had many twists and turns, like most roads in this hilly terrain. I was in the first Humvee with half the crew, and the LT was in the second, with the rest. We had to make a hard left around a huge boulder, and ran smack dab into a trap. There were at least fifty heavily armed men waiting for us. It would have been pure suicide to try and fight our way out of this mess. So the LT did what any good commander would do in this situation, he had us surrender. Our Humvee's had GPS markers on board, and when we didn't

arrive at the school, a whole lot of someone's would come looking for us.

In an instant, we were roughly removed from our vehicles, stripped of our weapons and equipment, and our hands zip tied behind our backs. The last thing any of us saw was a large black hoods that were then pulled over our heads. We were then herded into some type of vehicle and then driven away from our Humvee's. I then thought to myself, "So much for the GPS being our savior."

We had been in custody and on the road for what seemed like hours. Finally, the vehicle came to a stop, the doors were pulled open, and we were moved into a large building and placed into a small, cramped room. Our hands were untied, and we were allowed to remove the hoods. It took some time for our eye's to adjust to the light, and we then found ourselves in a make shift cell. In what was a large building that was very old and decaying. It even smelled old. There was always an armed guard standing at the door, and we were allowed to speak to each other, but no louder than a whisper. We soon found out, quite by accident that we weren't the only captives being held. There were at least five other groups, all westerner's locked up in the same manner.

The food and water was very scarce, with us being fed only once a day. We were given a small bottle of water to drink, and only

provided a temporary felling of relief. Of course bathing and washing up was really out of the question. In the corner of the cell was a stove pipe looking structure with a toilet seat attached. I'll let your mind finish the rest of that description and use. It just added to smells we all were assaulted with.

Upon our capture, all of our jewelry and watches had been taken, so we had no way of telling just how long we were been held. At this time, we guessed it was about three days by using the cycle of guard changes. Each had been at the door for at least four hours. Even with our whispers to occupy us, and keep ourselves calm, we all were beginning to feel a bit squirrely. But then we all heard a key being placed into the lock, and three men stepped into the small cell. We knew one for sure must have been the leader of this pack of rabid dogs. The other two were quite burly, and armed to the teeth. Just in case, I guess.

The leader began to speak in perfect English. Maybe even a bit of Jersey in his voice. Could this be one of those home grown terrorist we all had been on the hunt for? It really didn't matter, as he was the one calling all of the shots. "As you may have guessed by now, I am the leader of this group of patriots," he started. His head and face were covered by a head scarf, and he wore very expensive sunglasses in an effort to hide his identity. "You will choose one of your group to be made as an example to show our strength. The rest will be held until the rest of our brothers and sisters in arms are back among us. Right now, they

are being held, quite unlawfully, by your countries. You will have a five minute period to make your selection,” he then said flatly.

In an attempted to save his men, the LT stood up and volunteered himself. The Leader just laughed, and scoffed at the move. “No officers will be taken. You are too valuable as a bargaining chip.” He then scanned the room, and his eyes fell upon me. “You there, the small one in the back. You will come with us,” he stated in no uncertain terms. My men began to rise in protest, but the burly guards just leveled their automatic weapons at my crew, who then quieted down, but not silent.

“It’s okay guys,” I said firmly. “We are Marines, and we always will be. Just remember that,” was my response as I stood up proudly. I then turned to the LT, as I figured of all the guys, he was most likely had the best chance of making it out. “Hey LT. Find my girl, Melissa, back in the states, and tell her I loved her to the very end. And that I am sorry we never had the chance to be together.”

My LT looked into my eyes and said, “Of course Tim. You are my best guy, and we all will remember your sacrifice. Stay strong, bro.” It was the last that I would hear his voice for quite some time. I then looked back at the rest of my crew, and threw them a thumbs up, and proudly left them behind. I did hear a last word from them, “Oorah.” I hoped the LT and my crew could find Melissa. Of everything in my life that I had been through, she

was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Once outside of the holding cell, I was taken to another room, some distance away. The door was unlocked, and I was roughly pushed inside. There, I saw five others, and figured that there was one taken from each captive group. Each had a proud look on their faces, but like me, there was fear in their eyes, fear of the unknown. There were two from France in UN uniforms, one Englishman, Aussie, Belgium. Without words, we all shook each other's hands as we were now brothers in whatever lay ahead of us.

A few hours later, the head guy came back, and entered our new cell. He still had that goon squad with him. A chair was brought in, and setup very near the door. He then invited us to sit before him.

"You all have been selected to join a very small, but important group," he began. "As men, you know all too well that we all have needs, physical needs. And our women are too valuable to us for other tasks. So as westerners, you have a knowledge that will allow my men to enjoy themselves without tarnishing our religion. So in a very short time you'll be taken to another location where you will begin a journey into a whole new world." It seemed to me that he was taking in riddles, and was very puzzling. By the looks on the others faces, they too, were just as confused as I was. "So please, enjoy some fruit and cold water

while you wait,” he stated. With that, he rose and left the cell. Immediately, several older women entered, carrying a basket of local fruits and tall bottles of water, all on ice. After so long with so little to drink over the last few days, we all dove for the water as soon as the women had left. I can’t speak for the others, but that was the best tasting water that I’ve ever had. But that would prove to be a ruse. Unknown to us, the chilly fluid had been spiked. In just minutes, the room began to spin for each of us, and one by one, we fell to the floor, out cold. That was the last thing that I remembered, as I was the last to succumb.

It was like a dark blanket had been tossed over my mind. I didn’t know where I was, or how I got there. All I did know was that I was in a lot of pain. From my face, to my chest, and all the way down to my crotch and feet. I have been hurt plenty of times as I grew up, we all have. But it never hurt nearly as bad as this. I then heard a male voice.

“Can you hear me? If you can, gently nod your head,” he whispered. I did what was asked, but it was a real chore, and I felt like my head was going to fall off. “Very good,” he continued. “I am sure you are in a lot of pain and discomfort right now, but we will help with that very soon. I just wanted to see how you and the others were progressing.” I tried to speak, but all I heard was the air passing through my mouth. “Please refrain from trying to speak, as it may harm your voice for the long term.” As a Marine, I did as I was told as I was used to taking orders. I

then felt a wave of comfort pass through my body. I thought to myself, "God love those pain meds," as I stopped hurting almost immediately. I think I then drifted off to sleep, I am not very sure about that.

When you are under the influence of medication, there really is no time frame to speak of. One never knows if it's day or night, morning or evening. Hours pass as if they were minutes. Everything is just all clumped together. I finally could tell that the medication was starting to wear off, and I was really waking up.

As I opened my eyes, it was like looking through a cobweb. I batted my eye lids a few times, and it seemed to clear, but just on the periphery of my vision, the cobwebs remained. As I tried to get up, I found that I was tied to the bed, both hands and feet, but the majority of pain was gone. I found that I was quite stiff, probably from laying down so long, and I felt that all of my strength was gone. I then remembered that a nurse was talking to me, but I couldn't understand what she was saying. All of a sudden, I felt something smooth, warm, and very large shoved into me. I tried to escape that feeling, but it just wouldn't go away. In fact, I still feel it to this day.

A man, I think the same one I had spoken to before, grabbed the

chart at the end of the bed, flipped through a few of the pages, then replaced the chart. He then rolled a chair up to my bedside, and sat down heavily. "Hello, my name is Doctor Stevenson. I have a few things that I need to share with you. Over the past couple of months, your body has been put through some major changes. I also need to share something else that you need to understand," he said, his voice heavy with regret. "My family and I were on a vacation. Not long after we arrived, we were kidnapped and brought here. My wife and two young daughters were taken elsewhere, and I was threatened to do as I was told or they would be put to death." I could see tears forming at the corners of his eyes. My first instinct was that I believed his story.

"I am an OB-Gyn, a women's doctor. But I am also a surgeon that has very specific clientele. But enough about me, let's discuss the changes in you," he started. I could feel something strong was coming my way. "To begin with, you have had several surgeries. Facial feminization, breast implants, liposuction to your mid-section, and the fat was placed on your hips and bottom. There was surgery performed on your feet to make them a bit narrower, but the biggest change you've had is a complete sex reassignment procedure." He stopped there, letting my mind catch up with what he was telling me. I am sure my jaw dropped, my eyes widened, and my heart began to race, wildly out of control.

"But why?" I asked in a soft but huskily feminine voice. The

sound of my words even shocked the doctor. “I don’t know, I wasn’t told why, just that it needed to be done.” I felt like I was going to pass out, right there. The doctor called to a nurse, who then brought a caplet of smelling salts. He broke it open, and waved it under my nose. I quickly regained my composure, but began to recoil from the acrid odor.

“I am so very sorry about all of this,” he gestured to my new body. “But my family comes first. I hope you understand. I know this is all a big shock to the system, and the position that I was put in,” he begged. I tried to show him that I did with a weak, little smile, and I saw his shoulders and body somewhat relax into the chair. “I only know you by your record, subject twelve, but they have given you a new name, Stephanie Martin. Again, I do apologize for all of this,” he whispered.

“It’s okay doc, I think I can understand, but I do have a few questions,” I stated.

“Please, ask away,” he then encouraged.

“If and when I ever get back home, can any of this be taken away, and make me a male again?” I wobbled.

He shook his head, “No. For all intents and purposes, you are now a woman. You cannot get pregnant, but in all other ways, you are a female.”

That final statement hit me like a ton of bricks. I suddenly felt sick to my stomach, and then thought about Melissa, and started to sob.

“You have been given high doses of female hormones that have changed your entire system,” he continued. “You will have a monthly cycle, but it will be all emotional.” The news just kept getting better and better I thought. “Not long ago, it felt like a truck had been driven up between my legs. What was that?” I then asked, afraid of the answer. “After your surgeries were completed, we needed to keep your vagina open while you healed. A medical dilator of various sizes were used to stretch the tissues.” The term ‘My vagina’ kept echoing through my mind.

“Thanks doc, for your honesty. I hope all goes well for you and your family. If I survive all of this, I will come looking for you and your wife and family. After all, I still am a Marine. No amount of surgery will ever change that,” I said with a much wider smile. The doctor then shook my now delicate hand, and then directed the nurse to remove all of the restraints and any remaining bandages. He then told me that I should get to know the new me, as I would be this way for the rest of my life. I nodded my head, as he then left my bedside, and headed for the next subject. My heart really went out to him, as I thought what an awful way to torture someone that is if his story was all that he said it was.

After the ties were released, and the final bandages were removed, I asked a nurse for a mirror. She was very hesitant for just a second or so, and once she looked to the doctor who then nodded his agreement, went to find one. It seemed to take some time, but when she returned, she handed me an ornate hand mirror. I thanked her, and she then turned and walked away, presumably to assist some of the other 'girls.' I could feel the lump starting to build in my throat. Did I really want to see what I now looked like? Was I going to be some sort of grotesque collection of male and female parts? I swallowed the lump away, and raised the mirror to eye level, and took a long look. Again, I nearly fainted once more. The image I saw could have been a twin of my mother when she was young. The hair, the eyes, lips and cheek bones were now identical to her. It was as if they had taken a picture of her, and then painted her image on my face. But I was in for more surprises. My body now looked like nothing I could have remembered.

I now sported moderate sized, perky breasts, my waist had been narrowed significantly, and could see that my hips now flared out in a very attractive manner. I must have lost a lot of weight while I was under as I had almost no muscle mass, just baby soft and smooth skin. But now, what I was worrying about was 'my vagina.' At this point in my life, I wasn't sure that I could ever accept that concept. Even now, it sounds so foreign. I moved my hand down my smooth, flat belly and under the

waistband of the panties I was now wearing. Only some of the hair had grown back, and I could feel the heat and moisture of my now new parts. Because of the dilator, I was not able to explore any further. But that was okay by me, at least for now as I don't think I could have coped with very much more.

I laid back and scanned the room. There, I found the other patients, but none looked familiar. I then thought, "*Why would they. If the doctor was correct, the men that I had come in with were now all women.*" Only one other patient was awake, and we looked at each other with both awe and sadness in our faces. She was beautiful, blonde, and quite buxom. We didn't speak, but our eyes spoke volumes.