

TRANSITIONING BEHIND THE WALL

Gwendolyn Nacole Young

ABSTRACT

My name is Gwendolyn Nacole Young, and I am incarcerated in the State of Virginia and have been since 2004. This writing is a composition of my quest for Gender-Affirming surgery in the manner of a penectomy so that I may align the self-autonomy of my physical body with the internal identity of my female Ego. My hope is that this writing will be received as a higher level of awareness for sincere skeptics while serving as a beacon of comfort to all Transgender and Transsexual individuals who are struggling to materialize their ethereal female or male identity.

INTRODUCTION

On June 2, 2020, while being housed at Keen Mountain Correctional Center, I was diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria by the Virginia Department of Corrections Gender Dysphoria Committee through that institution's Mental Health Department. The process of diagnosis consisted of six months of rigorous psychoanalysis in a question-and-answer format, focusing on certain family and relationship dynamics, gender and sexual identity, general mental health counseling so as to monitor my mental and emotional stability, and surveillance into how I interact with administrative staff and the inmate population. The diagnosis itself means that it has been clinically determined that there exists a marked disharmony between my internal gender identity (female Ego) and the physical gender identity assigned at birth (male). These opposing gender identities have further been determined to cause me clinical anxiety and depression so as to warrant intervention in the manner of appropriate treatment. For me, the clinical anxiety and depression of Gender Dysphoria is multifaceted and palpable—genetics have cruelly endowed me with a head-to-toe body type of hyper masculinity. As such, my suicidal ideology mantra had become “this male imposter in the mirror must be eliminated in order for Gwendolyn to live and be set free.”

In April of 2021, I began female hormone therapy and on October 18, 2023, I legally changed my name to Gwendolyn Nacole Young. These actions serve as female precursors toward the complete alignment of my body and personhood with that of my female Ego. Legally changing my name to align with my female identity and being able to undergo and experience the benefits of cross-hormone therapy was and remains validating to my Ego. To observe my metamorphosis of body—considerable breast development, softening of the skin, the feminine

contouring of body and transitioning to the more nuanced delicacy of emotions and more pliable thought patterns—is a revolutionary coming out for Gwendolyn Nacole. I am now in dire need of body alignment in the manner of Gender-Affirming Surgery.

I. GENDER-AFFIRMING SURGERY

For me, masculinity is the unrelenting enemy. It is the antithesis to the manifesting of my female identity. It is the root cause of my clinical anxiety and depression, *i.e.*, Gender Dysphoria. The male genitalia that remains attached to my body produces the male hormone testosterone. It is this “culprit hormone” which is proximately responsible for my misery, the exhibition of masculinity.

Gender-Affirming Surgery in the manner of a penectomy is the complete removal of male genitalia and full remission and production of the male hormone testosterone. This manner of Gender-Affirming Surgery eliminates the root cause of my Gender Dysphoria diagnosis while simultaneously providing life-saving health care benefits. I would no longer be compelled to inject my body with toxic levels of testosterone blockers and would be able to reduce my estrogen intake to a safe, non-life-threatening level with yet maximum benefit. Gender-Affirming Surgery will establish satisfactory alignment of my body with the female identity of my Ego and female precursors. At this juncture of my transitioning, Gender-Affirming Surgery in the manner of a penectomy is the next natural course of action—the bridge and door to Gwendolyn Nacole’s introduction to life and birth into the world. The Virginia Department of Corrections should grant my request for Gender Affirming Surgery. To do otherwise would be a dereliction of duty.

II. THE OPPOSITION

I have struggled with whether I should give attention in this writing to the unwarranted animus that has been perpetrated against me over the years of my transitioning by certain VDOC employees and those of the inmate population (who all shall remain nameless) merely because of my Transgender and now, Transsexual status. Suffice it to say that over the years I have encountered more than my share of discrimination, hate, harassment and opposition—the hindering, delaying, interfering with and, at times, the downright denial of my doctor-ordered hormone treatment and other forms of Gender-Affirming care; sexual harassment in the nature of disparaging or flirtatious remarks about my body or Transsexual status; discrimination from the most trivial matters to those that affect my day to day livelihood; and intimidation and staunch opposition (at times adversarial). While it appears that VDOC has a sufficient policy in place to combat said unprofessional conduct (zero tolerance for such conduct

directed toward or in the presence of someone of my status or any other inmate for that matter), there are certain employees who are emboldened to misbehave for knowing that there is a lack of administrative oversight and general failure to carry out meaningful investigations. Policy accountability, in the manner of these particular violations are either nonexistent or minimal. These said happenings are themselves an added layer of anxiety and depression that compounds the clinical anxiety and depression of my Gender Dysphoria diagnosis.

III. THE REALITY

Nature is the inherent character, quality, and constitution of the person, *i.e.*, the Ego. This Ego is there at birth with the remotest level of awareness, waiting for its clear canvas of consciousness to be impressed and painted upon by the immediate and lifetime dictatorship of outer influences. As this Ego evolves, it naturally blends itself with the five physical senses. until its sense become its reality. Then suddenly, one day, through the magic of epiphany, we realize that we are either actors or puppets and the life we live is the stage upon which we perform and carry out our part in history to the tune of our destiny. Surround yourself with darkness and complete silence. Close your eyes, stop up your ears and imagine that you cannot see, hear, feel, taste or smell. After 30 or so seconds ask yourself, "Who am I?"

The rediscovery of self is an empowering and transforming reality. Gwendolyn Nacole is benevolent, humanitarian, honest, philanthropic, socially and politically conscious, and a crusader for justice that is tempered by equity. For those reasons I embrace her and ever defend the right to exist in the world through her.

CONCLUSION

In closing I give thanks to my dearest friend Margaret for helping to create space for growth in the midst of this chaotic incarceration. To my friend Wyatt, I owe you so much gratitude. Nicole and Allison, the core of my legal team: thank you for the nurturing touch and believing in my authenticity. The ACLR: thank you for granting me this limited platform to share my perspective (overlooking the shade of eccentricity). To the audience of readers— "I Love you and hope to See you soon." Gwendolyn Nacole.

