

TRANSEXUALS' DILEMMA

by Jennifer L. Thompson

Angela K. Douglas is back in town. This time her gig is promotional, but then when isn't it? The question is, is it legit? After four years as president of the Transsexual Action Organization (TAO), Angela has abdicated in order to do what she has always wanted to do, publish her own magazine.

The magazine is called *Mirage* and the name fits. It was created to provide a forum for transsexuals and transvestites engaged in writing, art, poetry and photography. Ms. Douglas is the Editor and energizing force.

But who is Angela Douglas and why is the former rock singer, Air Force soldier, bi-sexual, husband and feminist now carrying the transsexual banner? A point of interest for purists, the TAO spokesperson is pre-operative and a self admitted bi-sexual.

In an effort to expand distribution, Angela put together the first issue of *Mirage* in Miami Beach, is currently at work in San Francisco on the second, and plans to zoom off to the Big Apple and London for the third and fourth issues. It's nice work if you can get it.

Why the skepticism towards this new movement? I've heard from Rev. Ray Broshears about the rising number of post-operative transsexual funerals over which he's presided. I've also been told that Elliot Blackstone of the SFPD estimates that only one out of 900,000 people is apt to be a transsexual. Just remember before you get on that chopping block, that when it's gone, it's gone. (Most sex change operations are male to female.) Which is not to negate the fact that true transsexuals should be able to have the operation, and for free if need be.

Interestingly enough, San Francisco *Mirage* was operating out of the offices of Dr. John Brown, a man who does sex-change operations and other plastic surgery such as breast implants, when I interviewed Angela K. Douglas and Wendy Davidson, Dr. Brown's nurse and San Francisco TAO Director.

A sex change operation will run you about \$4,000, and that's nice work if you can get it. And Dr. Brown does. Dr. Brown also answers questions of interest to *Mirage* readers in the "My body"

section of the magazine. While he admits that a sex change operation is not for everyone, he encourages people to look into the operation.

In a philosophic if not scientific sense, we are all daughters and sons of Eve and Adam, but who can remember traipsing through the Garden of Eden? Even Cain and Abel, with their time span advantage never got the message. The post-operative transsexual faces a unique problem. She/he is ostracized by the gay community, and regarded as a freak by the straight community. Nothing could be further from the truth, reports Ms. Douglas and Wendy Davidson.

Ms. Davidson warns male patients seeking the sex change operation who are living with men, that after the operation their lover will split. "Oh, not my man," she hears time and time again. "Look, just be prepared for the worst," she warns. Ms. Davidson, a pre-operative transsexual, has found that without fail the gay lover will desert the post operative transsexual.

Where does the rejected transsexual turn? Few straight men are attracted once they learn a woman is a transsexual. As Ms. Douglas told me, few transsexuals are willing to run around in the buff to prove that they have had the operation. Besides, even with a functioning manufactured clitoris, a transsexual just isn't the same as the real thing. For women seeking a sex change operation, the sexual outlook is even bleaker. Thus far doctors have been unable to manufacture a functional penis.

Both Ms. Douglas and Ms. Davidson emphasized that the psychological benefits of transsexualism far outweigh the sexual. Ms. Douglas, a print media freak, seeks to establish a transsexual sub-culture through *Mirage* and perhaps alleviate some of the psychological strain of transsexualism. But is transsexualism a state of being worth promoting? Transsexuals know who they are, but sexually confused people who think it might be a gas to join a flashy subculture are victims of the media.

On the other hand, it is important for the true transsexual to have a forum, but in my opinion, *Mirage's* credibility is rather low. *Mirage* with the exception of Dr. Brown's column is an almost on-

woman production. Ms. Douglas may very well believe in what she's doing, but she may also be the victim of her own print media freakism, a professional transsexual. Although Ms. Douglas did assure me that she would have a sex operation in the near future, in the next breath she told me she is bisexual.

After chatting with Angela and Wendy, I did a little checking on their background. According to Rev. Ray Broshears, Wendy, a former boxer with the muscles to prove it, was refused a sex change operation as was Angela by the National Transsexual Counseling Unit. NTCU works with reputable doctors and requires a year of psychological testing before permission for an operation is given.

According to Officer Blackstone who works with both gays and transsexuals in San Francisco, and Broshears, head of San Francisco's Gay Activist Alliance (GAA), Angela K. Douglas has a well established reputation for sowing seeds of dissension both in this town and in Miami. Word came to Broshears from Miami that Angela had wrecked more havoc than

a hurricane in the Miami GAA.

The story of the transsexual "invasion" of the Daughters of Bilitis is well-known to members of the gay community and a contributing factor to the poor relations existing between male and female gays. Several members of DOB were hip to the fact that Beth Elliot was a post operative transsexual and DOB member. Those who know kept their mouths shut realizing that Beth regarded herself as a woman and was happy as a DOB member. During her feminist period, Angela became active in the DOB using their office and getting to know the ladies, according to Broshears. Ms. Davis found it necessary to disclose Beth's transsexual identity at which point she was bounced from the DOB, creating dissension within the organization and great personal unhappiness for Beth.

In the words of both Ms. Douglas and Ms. Davidson, "Most important to remember is that true transsexuals don't want to be connected with the transsexual movement after their operation. These people want to fit into society as men or women."

The Tough Guys Who Were Paper Tigers

The time: America. B.B.C. (Before Birth Control). 1958.

The form: Teenage macho. The gangs. Our new romantic heroes. The greasers come home to roost. Brando's boys. Competitive inarticulation. If you had seen *The Lords of Flatbush* in the fifties, the whole plot would have been woven around the theft of the car and the Lords would have been in the slammer or, as it was known then, "reform school."

It's not like that today.

Today, we love them. Guys who were known to kill other guys with a slung bicycle chain or a tire iron, who beat up the weak simply because they were smaller or more timid; well, they were entertaining in a malevolent way, and underneath they were really a nice buncha guys. They just wanted to be loved

Yeah.

Dukes. Lords. Pharaohs. War Lords. Always an image of royalty, a status the poor would never attain, the collective fantasy of the street gang. The Lords of Flatbush are paper tigers. Small town boys imitating their tougher city brethren. The Amboy Dukes would have eaten them alive. The Gypsy Jokers or the Hell's Angels would have used them for an hors d'oeuvre. They're strictly nostalgia as it never was, a quartet of leather comedians.

The nice girl who doesn't wanna take off her bra. Twaaaang. The tough guy who "knocks up" his "chick" an' doesn't wanna marry her. Scooby-doooby-doooby-dooooo.

Sofa-necking, spit-curls, baggy skirts, sweaters, baby-sitting, pomposity, pool, and pregnancy. I loved it.--C.G.