

1952 the world's first sex-change operation

By Andy Rudd

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Former US soldier George Jorgensen shocked the world by returning from a 'holiday' in Denmark as a slender, blonde, woman called Christine.

Jorgensen, from New York, made headlines across the globe with one screaming "Ex-GI becomes blonde beauty!"

After becoming convinced he was trapped in the wrong body as a teenager, Jorgensen was always looking for a solution to make him feel happier.



And that breakthrough came in the 1940s when, while enlisted in the Army, he read an article about a Danish doctor who was experimenting with gender therapy.

Dr Christian Hamburger was testing hormones on animals and Jorgensen hoped that the doctor's research could help him.

So in 1950 Jorgensen secretly travelled to Copenhagen to meet Dr Hamburger.

The doctor diagnosed him as transsexual and helped him take the first steps to becoming a woman by prescribing him a long course of female hormones and encouraging him to dress like a woman in public and take on a female identity.

Psychologist Georg Sturup examined Jorgensen and agreed that he was certain he wanted to become a woman.

However, before the life-changing operation could be performed, the Danish government had to be petitioned to change the law so that castration was allowed.

In 1952, after more than a year of hormone therapy, Jorgensen finally went under the surgeon's knife in a series of operations to change her genital organs from male to female.

Following the procedure, Christine wrote to her parents: "Nature made a mistake which I have had corrected, and now I am your daughter."

Documentary maker Teit Ritzau who made a film about Jorgensen in the 1980s, said: "Apparently the surgery was successful enough for Jorgensen to feel satisfied.

"There seemed to be no complications and no side-effects from the treatment, which is quite amazing when you think about how primitive things were at the time."

Jorgensen died of cancer at the age of 62, in 1989 but her bravery and determination has helped thousands of others like her, who feel trapped in the wrong body.

Dear Mum and Dad, son wrote, I've now become your *daughter*

By John Sampson in New York

Mr and Mrs. Jorgensen had a son. His name was George and he was twenty-six.

But now, a letter from Denmark has reached their home here. It was in George's handwriting.

With it was a picture of a strange, beautiful girl.

Mr. and Mrs. Jorgensen read the first lines of the letter and stared at each other amazed.

"Just how does a child tell its parents such a story as this?" the letter began.

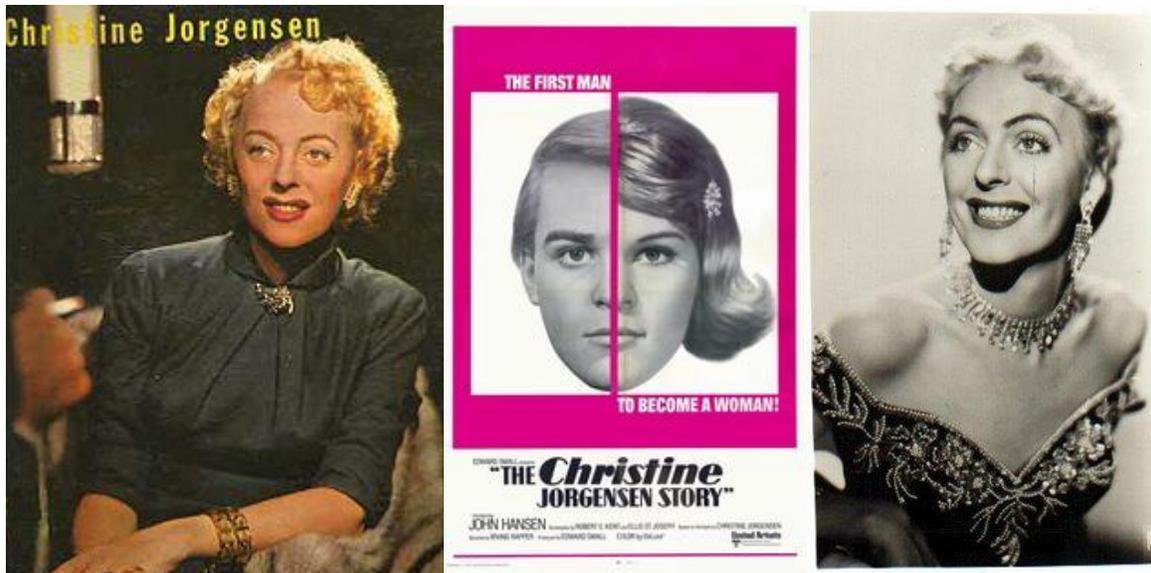
"I am still the same old Brud (George's nickname).

"BUT, MY DEARS, NATURE MADE A MISTAKE WHICH I HAVE HAD CORRECTED, AND NOW I AM YOUR DAUGHTER.

"I do so want you to like me very much and not to be hurt because I didn't tell you sooner about why I came over here."

George, a former GI, has turned into a girl after a two-year treatment in Denmark involving six operations and almost 2,000 injections.

He is now known as Christine.



The Daily Mirror Copenhagen correspondent writes:

Christine Jorgensen, a tall, beautiful blonde with blue eyes, looks a typical American girl.

She was treated by Dr Karl Hamburger of the Serum Institute, Copenhagen.

Dr. Hamburger said professional etiquette prevented his discussing the case, but he commented: "There is some misunderstanding about this story and there is also some reality."

Christine said yesterday: "I am glad I am now a woman. I am convinced that I shall now be really happy."

She added that she had been doing photographic work during her stay of two years and six months in Denmark.

"I am afraid that people may now become more interested in me than in my work," she said.

"I am convinced that many more people should make up their minds to do the same as I have done. I feel that all the suffering I have gone through has been fully compensated for.

"I came to Denmark because I had friends here and because I knew that Danish doctors had a far freer view on the question of changing the sex of people."

As an American soldier she did office work, she said.

