

The Man in the Mirror

By Sinclair ("Sy") Rogers

I lived as a woman for over a year, in preparation for a sex-change operation. Maybe if I became female, I reasoned, I would finally secure real love from a man.

Imagine—*me* married! A day of rejoicing and celebration, of sharing love between family and friends. At my side was my wife, the woman I loved. But special as it was, our wedding held a much deeper significance.

There was a time when I would never have believed such fulfillment was possible for me. Only three years earlier, I was lost in pursuit of my identity, desperately seeking love and acceptance. I was transsexual—at least that's what my psychiatrist called it. Although physically a man, I felt "trapped" in the wrong body. I was obsessed with the desire to change my outward gender and conform my body to what I *believed* I really was—both mentally and emotionally. I convinced myself, and worked hard to convince others, that sex-change surgery was necessary for me if I was ever to lead a fulfilled life.

Unlike many transsexuals, however, I was also very homosexually active prior to my sex-change efforts. I began having homosexual encounters before I was ten years old. I was aware of an intense desire to be intimate with men, and I wanted men to desire me too.

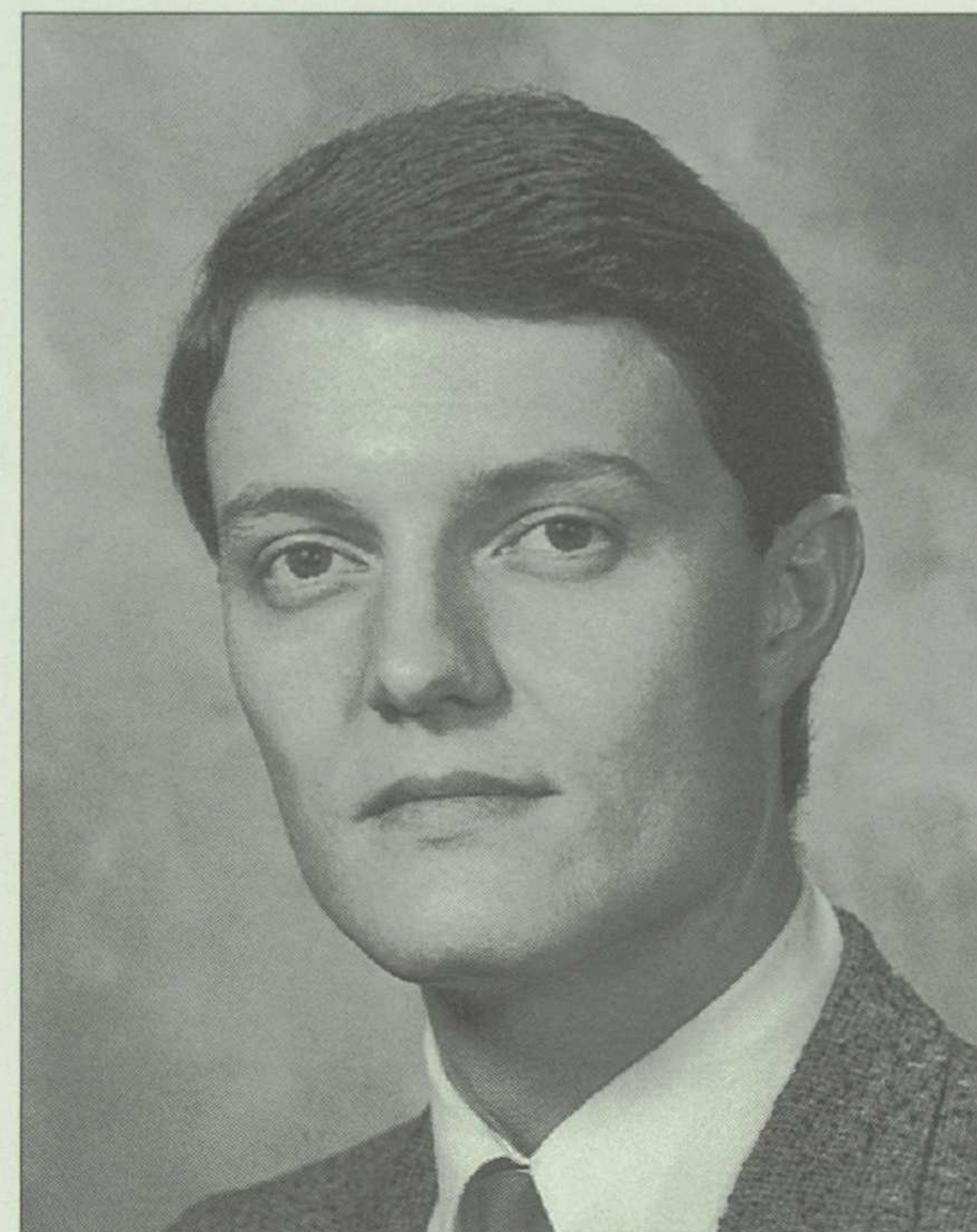
Watching movies as a child, I noticed that the girl was always the object of the hero's attention and affection. My heart would ache as I thought, *I wish I were wanted like that.*

The first half of my life was an emotional concentration camp. My alcoholic mother was killed in a car wreck when I was four. Prior to that, I was sexually molested by a family "friend." After my mom's death, I went sent to live with relatives for several months while my father pieced together a new life for himself. When I returned to live with my dad and grandmother in our small hometown, my father earnestly attempted to rebuild our relationship—and he was mystified by my refusal to bond with him. I perceived that my dad had abandoned me; I was angry and hurt, and vowed never to be hurt again, especially by my father.

Later in school, I was routinely ridiculed, rejected and physically abused due to my effeminate mannerisms. Feeling a complete failure as a male, and seeing no hope for improvement, I begged God to change me into a woman.



Sy living as a woman



A break from this tension came when I went to Brazil as an exchange student. During that

summer, I felt acceptance from Brazilian people. My host's parents were actors in the theatre, so they worked with many open homosexuals. As I met these people and saw their apparent success, I decided maybe there was a chance I could be happy *and* homosexual.

So I embraced my inner desires. *After all*, I told myself, *I'm attracted to other guys, and everyone else seems so certain that I'm gay. So I guess that's what I really am.*

Shortly after my return to the U.S., I joined the military. I wasn't rejected for being feminine, though some men did avoid me. Yet others sought me out for secret encounters. In spite of the perverseness, sex became my only means for being wanted or for feeling valued. This temporary security made all the risks worth taking.

I was eventually stationed in Hawaii. There I totally immersed myself in Honolulu's gay scene. Many homosexuals are mature and responsible but I, like many others, was not. I got involved in minor prostitution, drug abuse, and the sometimes dangerous life of the street.

But I also began to grow weary of my gay lifestyle. Behind the facade of acceptance and the promise of love, I saw many unhappy, cynical and desperate people. They were all searching for that elusive "perfect match" that would fulfill them. Couples who claimed to be in love were often objects of envy and doubt.

How long will it last this time? I asked myself. *Could this be all there is to life?* Most of my gay friends said we were born gay—we couldn't change. Some even believed that God had created them to be homosexual.

Returning to Hawaii after being on tour in the Orient for several months, I learned that my two closest gay friends were now attending a "gay church," the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of Honolulu.

I wasn't really interested in God at the time, but I did like the idea of a religion that approved of my sexuality. Up to this point religious people, though often sincere, seemed only to offer me a message of condemnation. I thought that God only loved heterosexuals. Eventually my two gay friends became the first male couple to be "married" in the state of Hawaii. I was one of the best men at their wedding.