

New Documentary Tells the Stories of Six Detransitioners

Once they see the error of their ways, they have to deal with the trauma of having mutilated their bodies.



by Bruce Bawer

Their number may not be legion yet, but it will be, and soon. They're the people, most of them extremely young, who were convinced by parents, friends, teachers, school psychologists, online "influencers," psychotherapists, and/or doctors that they were transgender – only to realize, after subjecting themselves to puberty blockers, sex hormones, and perhaps even radical surgery in the name of "gender affirmation," that they'd made a tragic mistake.

In the splendid new documentary [*Affirmation Generation*](#), which is viewable for free on Vimeo starting today, we meet several such men and women.

One of them is a girl named Cat, who, after dreaming one night that she was a boy, asked her parents to take her to a doctor. He confirmed her transgender identity on her first visit and put her on testosterone – “T” – on her third.

At first, she enjoyed its effects: increased energy, a deeper voice. But after a few months, she developed edema, gained weight, and suffered heart palpitations. Soon enough, she saw that sex change is a fantasy – and an unhealthy one. “I don’t believe that anybody is born in the wrong body,” she now says, lamenting that because of so-called expert advice, “I thought I only had one path that I could take.”

Then there’s Joel, who wanted to be a girl. He was even luckier than Cat: his doctor prescribed estrogen – “E” – on Day One. Soon, Joel was an internet influencer: we see a video clip of him, lipsticked, bewigged, gushing about the wonders of “E.” But the high didn’t last long. A few months later, bearded and somber, he recalls his recent suicide attempt and psych-ward stint.

Cat and Joel appear to be in their 20s; David is middle-aged. In his youth, he started living as a woman not because he thought he was a girl, but because his obvious homosexuality had exposed him to ridicule. When he took “E,” it gave him osteoporosis. Still, he wanted surgery – for which, back then, it was necessary, or at least easier, to go abroad. He’d already planned a Thailand trip for this purpose when a post-op trans friend urged him to cancel.

“All of my life,” the friend said, “I thought that if I could just become a woman I would find peace and joy.” But no: “I’m more miserable now.... I think about taking my life every day.” So David dropped the surgery – and stopped playing at being a

woman. “I realized,” he says, “that I didn’t just live the lie. I was the lie.”

In 2011, only 0.1 percent to 0.3 percent of Americans thought they’d been “born in the wrong body.” In 2019, 2 percent of American teenagers did so. By 2021, [no fewer than 9 percent](#) of American teenagers in public school identified as transgender. It used to be the case that this condition – gender dysphoria – typically developed over a period of many years, beginning in early childhood. But the past decade or so has seen the rise of an entirely new phenomenon, [Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria](#) (ROGD), which is plainly the result not of a deep-seated mental disorder but of teens succumbing to a toxic trend.

[Lisa Littman](#), the scientist who first identified and named ROGD, is one of many professionals interviewed in *Affirmation Generation* who’ve dealt with patients like Cat and Joel. Unlike the lunatic pseudo-experts who appear on camera in Matt Walsh’s recent must-see documentary, *What Is a Woman?* – and who enthusiastically push “E” and “T” and “top surgery” and “bottom surgery” on naive young people – the real experts in *Affirmation Generation*, who’ve dared to swim against the tide, recognize all this as dangerous nonsense.

Among other things, they address crucial psychological aspects of this foolishness that the pseudo-experts contrive to ignore. For example, educator Sasha Ayad points out that many young people who profess a transgender identity have never even been in a relationship – which obviously raises questions about their ability to understand in a remotely mature way what they’re getting themselves into. Another psychological factor that demands to be taken seriously, notes therapist Stella O’Malley, is that a great many of these young detransitioners felt, while living as the opposite sex, that they were “constantly fighting against the onslaught of nature.”

Then there's the matter of the uniqueness – or near-uniqueness – of the current protocols for dealing with individuals who say they're trans. Therapist Stephanie Winn observes that the automatic affirmation of these patients' self-diagnoses – on which the prevailing U.S. guidelines insist – represents “a departure from the standards of care for any other condition.” And psychoanalyst Lisa Marchiano notes that the only modern precedent for treating psychiatric problems with “physical intervention” was the “pretty barbaric” lobotomy craze of the 1940s.

Endocrinologist William Malone sums up the medical downside of “E” and “T.” Males on “E” can develop (among many other side effects) blood clots, strokes, gallstones; “T” can give females heart disease, high blood pressure, breast cancer. To prescribe such toxic substances to self-diagnosed kids, charges Malone, is nothing less than a scandal – especially given that nowadays anywhere between 65 percent and 98 percent of those who think that they're transgender in their youth will change their minds in adulthood.

Professional cheerleaders for transition routinely assert that trans-identifying kids who aren't instantly put on the conveyor belt – puberty blockers, hormones, surgery – are suicide risks; this claim, as the real experts demonstrate, is baseless. Many if not most of the cheerleaders, as it happens, have financial motives for drawing new customers to the transgender clinics: rich doctors get even richer; Big Pharma gets even bigger. So eager are they, in fact, to feed kids into the transgender pipeline that they deliberately ignore the pre-existing complaints – such as ADHD, PTSD, anorexia, and autism (fully 48 percent of supposedly trans kids are “on the spectrum”) – that likely explain those kids' readiness to clutch on to transgenderism as a life raft.

The experts in *Affirmation Generation* also discuss the role of the U.S. as, increasingly, an outlier in its approach to the treatment of purported transgenderism: whereas most other

Western countries affirm a “watchful waiting” approach – i.e., give young people time to change their minds before you do anything extreme to their bodies – America is “digging in its heels” on the need for fast, radical, and irreversible action.

Then there’s the almost universally misunderstood gay angle. Many people who haven’t examined this aspect of the subject carefully enough think that the transgender movement is an extension of the gay rights movement, a further step on the road away from heteronormativity. On the contrary, the trans campaign is, quite simply, a new front in the old war on homosexuality.

Gratifyingly, the real experts in *Affirmation Generation* get it. “The trans rights movement,” maintains Winn, “has coopted the gay rights movement.” Joey Brite, a lesbian, accuses transgender advocates of “transing the gay away.” They’re both absolutely correct. Statistics suggest that the overwhelming majority of young people who transition will, in Marciano’s words, “eventually desist ... and be lesbian or gay.” Which means that doctors are “destroying the sexual function of gay kids.” Which, of course, is nothing less than criminal.

David, the older detransitioner interviewed in the film, has strong feelings about this calamitous state of affairs. Young gays who are pushed into embracing trans ideology, he says, need to be told in no uncertain terms: “You can just be gay – and it’s okay!” Of the 60 percent of self-identified trans people who end up detransitioning (the rate after four years is 30 percent), nearly a quarter grasp that they went through the whole process because they’d been unable to deal with being gay.

One of the saddest facts in this documentary crammed with sad facts is that detransitioners, once they see the error of their ways, don’t just have to deal with the trauma of having mutilated their bodies forever. They also have to deal, in many if not most cases, with mass rejection. People who

applauded them for boarding the trans bandwagon now demonize them for jumping off. Friends become enemies. Even doctors turn their backs. "People don't want to know that they exist," says Marciano. (It makes sense: the first impulse of ideologues, when confronted with realities that challenge their dogma, is to try to ignore them.)

Affirmation Generation is several important things at once: a sympathetic portrait of brave and articulate detransitioners; a cogent corrective to the lies told by the transgender movement; and a powerful indictment of a range of irresponsible professionals – from teachers who've betrayed their pupils' trust to doctors who've betrayed the Hippocratic Oath. Who's responsible for this documentary? The closing credits, in which you expect an answer to that question, tell us only that the film was "produced and directed by lifelong, West Coast, liberal Democrats in the entertainment industry." Why no names? Because "to take credit for this passion project would, at the very least, risk our careers."

Which left me feeling two ways at once. One, I greatly admired the anonymous people who took the time out from their successful careers to make this first-rate film. Two, I was frustrated. I've put my name on any number of books and articles in which I've presented arguments – on this issue and many others – that *have* closed professional doors to me. If more people had been open about sharing my views, the stigma of dissenting from orthodoxy might have been significantly diminished.

Yes, documentaries like this one are necessary in the struggle to quash the madness of transgenderism. But it's vital, too, for the creators of gutsy works like this to stand up and be counted.

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