



Groomed — and Doomed? Young Man: “I Was Trapped by Gender Ideology”

He became what he calls a male-to-female “transsexual” at only 15. He was coached and groomed by adults and promised a happier life, with the ever-elusive contentment lying just around the corner with the next body-altering procedure. After each step — puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones — he was essentially told, “Don’t worry; you’ll feel better when you take the *next* step.” But the misery intensified.

Then he had himself castrated.

This is the story of Steven A. Richards, who spent eight years living in the false garb of the opposite sex until he realized it was a lie that would never satisfy. Richards eventually escaped the MUSS (Made-up Sexual Status, aka “transgender”) illusion, though obviously not unscathed. But escape is not as easy as it sounds, he says, as the MUSS movement is a black hole of seductions for the susceptible. It sucks vulnerable kids in, makes it hard for them to leave, and encourages them to embrace extreme beliefs and hatred and engage in self-harm.

And vulnerable 15-year-old Steven certainly was. “Bullying at school, instability at home, and a lack of close friends had left me looking for somewhere to belong,” he [wrote](#) Wednesday at the *Washington Examiner*, “and the transgender movement happily provided one,” he adds — “at the cost of my health and sanity.”

His MUSS identity opened to Steven a network of friends and mentors. It also provided purpose, as he was initiated into a tightly knit community that gave him a cause: It was him and his new allies against the world — a “cis” (aka “normal”) world bent on their destruction.

He was groomed, too. “Left-wing oppression narratives disseminated online and in local ‘queer youth’ groups run by adult members of the movement cast ‘cis’ people as villains,” Steven explains. “‘Transitioning’ was a baptismal ritual in which I was cleansed of my wicked nature as a ‘cis male’ oppressor and reborn as a virtuous ‘marginalized’ person with a new name and body.”

So the MUSS movement is much like a street gang or, even more precisely, a cult. It takes lost boys (and girls) and gives them a place to belong. But they must swear loyalty to the group and adopt its beliefs, rituals, and enemies list.

Steven also explains that adult MUSS individuals schooled him on how to convince not just his parents,



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but also physicians and therapists, that he really did have “gender dysphoria.” This is, in layman’s terms, the strong sense that you’re stuck in the body of the “wrong” sex. Steven says, however, that in the MUSS movement it’s applied to any undesirable emotion. It’s a seductive message, he states, to a confused teen struggling with adolescent changes.

In an increasingly common story, at just 15 Steven was given Lupron, a chemotherapy drug used off-label to arrest puberty. (Note: While this is encouraged, the off-label use of ivermectin to treat Covid was mocked with the “horse de-wormer” line.) At just 16, he was given synthetic estrogen.

Steven certainly had doubts, but they were met with the claim that all MUSS individuals sometimes feel they aren’t really of that status; he was told that if he just persevered with his “transition,” he’d feel better in the end. He was rationalizing, in thrall to a fantasy that made him ignore that the drugs were making him feel worse. “I couldn’t think clearly. I started missing school,” Steven writes. “I developed chronic migraines. My bones ached. I became suicidal. I barely scraped up enough credits to graduate from high school.”

What’s so tragic is that Steven was likely one of the 90-plus percent of sexually confused boys whose gender dysphoria will naturally abate during adolescence — that is, if the youths are *left alone*. (The same is true of 80-plus percent of girls.)

Despite Steven’s misery, the MUSS “community” dismissed his symptoms as a function of gender dysphoria and “minority stress.” As he further explained:

My worsening health had nothing to do with my rejection of my body and identity or the experimental medications I was taking — it was all the fault of the transphobic society that tyrannized me. With this narrative, the community cultivated fear of the outside world in its members. I viewed anyone who questioned my transition or expressed concern for me as a bigot and disregarded them on principle. My parents learned to choose their words carefully so they wouldn’t set me off. I developed a panic response to hearing anyone express opinions that were deemed “problematic.” I suspected that everyone I passed on the street wanted me dead for being transgender.

This helps explain why MUSS individuals typically react with intense hostility to any questioning of their illusory status. Remember, too, that the more fragile the rationalization — and convincing yourself you’re the opposite sex is quite the house of cards — the more zealously it must be defended. For the slightest prick can burst that delicate bubble of delusion.

Steven says that at 19, his delusion was becoming unbearable. Yet ending his MUSS-alteration process would mean expulsion from the cult and the loss of “friends” (so much for respecting others’ “true selves”), and becoming one of those dreaded “cis males.” So he convinced himself he just needed to take the next step.

This meant orchiectomy — testicle removal. Strikingly, his doctor wrote a letter recommending such without hesitation while a psychiatrist she referred him to did so after *only one visit* (this enabled Steven to have the procedure covered by insurance). This is how seriously these “healers” take body-rendering, irreversible mutilation.

“Mutilated” is precisely how Steven now describes himself, too. The castration brought no happiness, of course, but only continued woe.



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And this is now an old story. Just ask Alan Finch, an Australian man who underwent an orchiectomy decades ago. “You fundamentally can’t change sex,’ he says,” [related](#) *The Guardian* in 2004. “The surgery doesn’t alter you genetically. It’s genital mutilation.”

“It’s all been a terrible misadventure,” the Australian summed up. “I’ve never been a woman, just Alan.”

So it was with Steven, too. Post-castration he found himself back to square one, dissatisfied, unhappy, facing the choice of “de-transitioning” or buying more surgery snake oil. This time, however, he let go of the lie.

Steven says that while accepting the damage done to him has been hard, many have it worse than he does, as they can’t leave the lie behind: They’re estranged from family and depend on the cult for food and housing. He says these people vainly hope that the next hormone treatments, the next surgery, a novel set of pronouns, and a new name will deliver them to the promised land. “But, as I learned,” he concludes, “it never can.”

Steven isn’t alone, either, as other young ex-MUSS individuals’ testimonials evidence (click [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

Now perhaps it’s clear why many states seek to ban MUSS “interventions” for children and youths. Puberty blockers and hormone treatments can lead to fertility and bone density problems, among other things, while the surgeries’ damage speaks for itself. These are not legitimate treatments, but constitute body-rending, life-changing, irreversible malpractice. They are as rational as Renaissance trephination or 1950s lobotomies — only more inexcusable, for we have less reason to not know better.



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