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DELISA NEWTON
...New A Woman

FROM MAN TO WOMAN!

Delisa Newton Tells
Of His - Her Sex Change
Story On Page 8 -- The First
Of A Two-Part Series



LIONEL NEWTON
...Was A Man

From Man To Woman

By Delisa Newton

This is the first of a two-part series on the life of Delisa Newton. Miss Newton tells how she underwent an operation which changed her from male to female. In her own words, she describes her frustrated existence as a boy, her homosexual experiences as an adult before the dramatic sex-change that turned her into what she always wanted to be — a woman.

'I was a complete misfit — I had the mind and soul of a girl and the body of a boy'

On this crowded planet where billions of people live, I am the one and only Negro sex change!

It took many years before I could claim this famous first, years of heartache, tears and pain. But now, at last, I'm a woman, really a woman.

You men who feel at home in your muscular, strong bodies — you'll never know what I have undergone.

You women who were lucky enough to be born female and soft, you'll never understand what a blessing your natural femininity is!

But I know, because I struggled for years to achieve it.

Let me tell you what it was like to realize even before I became a teenager that I was born the wrong sex.

Let me go back to the beginning and picture for you the life of a complete misfit — complete because I had the mind and soul of a girl, but the body of a boy.

I was born in New Orleans 32 years ago. New Orleans, a town of mixed blood, mixed languages and mixed desires. Some of that exotic mixture may have rubbed off on me.

My mama is from Haiti, a beautiful mulatto woman who speaks both French and English fluently in her soft, musical voice.

My father, a Baptist minister, I never knew well. He and my mama separated when I was three.

The doctors say I had no father figure to pattern myself after, so I identified with my stern, no-nonsense mother. Maybe.

But I did have brothers, one of them 14 years my senior. And he had as much author-





A woman at last! Photo on opposite page shows Delisa Newton as she is now — a sexy-looking woman. Before sex-change (photo above) her name was Lionel Newton. Right: she spends leisurely afternoon playing records by one of her favorite artists, the late Dinah Washington. Delisa is also a singer.



ity in the house as any father could have.

In fact, I had a big family, four brothers, five sisters. But even in the midst of this large, noisy clan, I was very much alone.

I never rough-housed with my brothers. I had no taste for such wild carrying on. And my sisters, naturally, didn't want me to join their games.

So I would go out to my playhouse, alone, and sit for hours in solitude. I had no friends, nobody.

The only person I could talk to was my mother, and I stayed around her as much as she'd let me. I wanted to help in the kitchen, join in the house cleaning, cook, bake — all the things she did.

At first, mama would shoo me out into the garden of our home in Houma, La. where we'd moved to. But I was stubborn and persistent.

Finally she got used to having me around her, and she got to like it. To this day I have kept up my housekeeping skill; it was good early training.

My memories of school in those days are dim. It was just a place I had to go for awhile during the day.

But when I turned 12, things changed. My peaceful little world centering between the playhouse and mama's kitchen was shattered. And all because of a note the principal sent home.

It was my hair the school official ob-

jected to. It was too long, she said, and must be cut close in a style appropriate for a young boy.

I was heartbroken. You see, until that day, I had never thought about my sex at all.

But I did like my hair. I thought it was pretty and I didn't understand why I had to cut it. The barber trimmed it very close, and I remember sobbing mournfully as he shaved around my ears.

I Want To Be A Girl

And when my mother explained that I was a boy, and boys didn't go around in long hair, I screamed, "Then I want to be a girl!"

I was so upset that I even ran a temperature, and had to stay in bed for a few days. But nothing I did would change the fact that I was the wrong sex.

It was around this time the dream started. In it, I would be struck by lightning. The pain was agonizing, but when I awoke, I was a girl.

I didn't know then how prophetic this dream was. Years later I would know such pain, agony that the strongest drugs couldn't subdue. And years later I would be reborn as a woman.

As I got a little older, my body began to awaken sexually, as all bodies do at this age. But it was boys I longed to be near, and this feeling scared me.

I never, ever made a pass at a schoolmate. I was too scared of what my mother would do to me if she found out. Instead, I kept to myself, a lonely outsider always.

When I turned 14, I decided to make a move. I couldn't bear living in isolation any longer. After all, I was a child. I needed to have fun, to make friends, to live!

So I lied about my age and joined the army. That was in 1949. I don't know how I got away with it.

I was skinny, had no muscles, and I had no body hair at all. But I made it all the same.

It wasn't long before I was sent overseas, an earthshaking trip for a boy who had only commuted between Houma and New Orleans. Those first months in the army were even lonelier than the isolated days at home.

I would lie in my cot at night wanting to die. For I felt none of the longed-for friendship for the other fellows in my company. I was not one of them — they knew it and I knew it.

The only person who showed me any compassion or understanding was an officer, a white man whom all of us respected deeply.

He was a kind of father to the group, someone who offered an open ear and mind to our troubles.

Though he was in his thirties, he seemed terribly old to me. The war had aged him a great deal, maybe that's why.

continued

'After everyone bedded down, I crawled to the officer's tent — I wanted to stay with him'

At first I found it hard to believe that a white man could have such understanding of us, but he did.

One night, our company went out into the fields on a bivouac. I was assigned to a tent with two rough guys I was downright scared to bunk with.

They had never liked me, and their taunts and jeers still rang in my ears as we set up camp that night.

So after everyone bedded down, I crawled over to the officer's tent. I wanted to stay with him.

"Get back to your tent, Newton," he ordered.

"Sir, I can't bed down with those guys, you know that," I said stubbornly.

"Well then stay outside and freeze!" he said.

I sat outside his tent for over an hour, shivering in that icy forest, until he finally relented.

"OK, Newton, you win. Come on in," he agreed.

I crawled into the tent, still trembling with cold, and took off my boots, jacket and helmet. Since the officer had a tent to himself, there was only one cot in it.

So I climbed in next to him. I remembered that I felt warm and safe.

And that night, for the first time, I knew love.

We were lovers for two years, until I was sent home to the States to be discharged. I wanted to stay on in Europe with him, but he wisely urged me to go.

"My life is a temporary one," he warned me. "I have to move around all the time, and I cannot take you with me."

I knew he was right, but I cried inside anyway when I boarded the train and rode away from the first person in my life who had shown me real warmth and love. My destination was Paris where I stayed for many months before I sailed for home.

(I'll tell you about "gay" Paree later!) I think about him although nearly 20 years have gone by. And I have always loved him deep in a corner of my heart.

Time may have robbed me of the details of our affair, but I still remember clearly the feeling I had for him.

We never wrote to each other, for we both



Getting it down on paper. Delisa sits at typewriter, with shoes off, to write about her astounding sex-change.

realized that there was no room in this world for our relationship.

No, once I returned to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where I was discharged, it was all over for the officer and me.

But how I wished I could be his wife. How I longed to be a woman so I could have lived with him openly, anywhere in the world he was sent!

Once again, I started dreaming about the shattering bolt of lightning that would change my body into a proper house for my mind and spirit.

Once again I was the lonely misfit, the outsider with nobody who loved or cared about him.

For a long time, I just drifted around the country, visiting sisters and brothers and, of course, my mother.

They were all glad to see me, but were too busy with their own new families and babies to pay me any real attention.

Finally I decided to go to school on the GI Bill. I had always wanted to be a nurse, my mother's profession, now I had the time and money to do it. And it took four years to become a registered nurse.

There was a good course taught out in Nevada state, so I wandered out there, never dreaming that my next lover, an ex-Marine and heavyweight boxer, was waiting for me.

Ready for date. Curvaceous Delisa poses for photographer before going out for the evening. Popular singer who bills herself as "Queen of the Blues" is proud of her album, "Delisa Sings Dinah Washington."

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continued

How does a man react when he discovers the 'woman' he loves is a man?

When it happened exactly, I don't recall, but in San Francisco, where nobody knew me as Lionel Newton, I started wearing women's clothes at night when I went out.

So much did I feel like a woman inside, that I had to at least have the outward displays of femininity.

No one questioned my garb as I was very feminine looking anyway and had no facial hair. I had never shaved in my life.

I was far from a completely happy person in those days, but I loved my courses and new clothes. It was, I thought, better than what I'd ever known before.

When I met Jack (that's not his real name — I can't tell you that) the man who would become my lover for over four years, I was totally unprepared for love — it's always this way, isn't it?

I was having coffee at the small restaurant near my apartment, exhausted from the exams I'd just finished. I was wearing a skirt and blouse, low shoes and a *ba-bushka*.

"May I sit here, it's the only empty chair." The deep bass voice attracted me. So did the strong, handsome face.

I remember wishing I were a real woman. It would be heaven to be able to flirt with such a man, I thought.

I smiled and moved my coat and book off the seat. "Can I buy you another cup of coffee?" he asked.

"I'd love it," I said, without thinking. I lied and told him I'd been a nurse overseas for the past months. At least I could mention my army life, a prime subject for conversation in those days.

Jack had been in the Marines, I learned. He was also an ex-boxer, which explained his taut, lithe physique.

Cup after cup of coffee and a million cigarettes later, we left the little restaurant. Jack said he'd call me soon.

It was exactly three weeks before I heard from him again. Still, I agreed to a date immediately. I was too lonesome to play either games or to feel I was misleading him into believing I was a real woman.

"Look, I have some explaining to do," he told me that first night out. "I wanted to call you before this, but I was afraid to."

We were sitting at a small piano bar, having a tall cool drink. The people around us were too busy talking and singing to overhear us.

"Jack, why should a tough ex-Marine be afraid of me? I don't bite."

We both laughed for a moment, then his face grew somber again.

"I never enjoyed a conversation more than ours that night," he said. "But I'm afraid we can't have anything more!"

"Jack, why?"

"Because — because I'm married." He said this very quietly and with a touch of guilt in his voice.

I put my hand over his and smiled. "Jack, let's go up to my

place," I said. "There's something I think you ought to know."

It sounded like a line in a B movie, but he followed me out of the bar.

Jack learned that night what I really was.

How did he react?

Well, how would you if you'd confessed your love to a woman only to discover she was a man?

He was shocked, of course. But he didn't beat me — that would come later in our affair — and he didn't rush out.

He listened to my story, told through tears, and he believed me.

"I don't care what your birth certificate says," he told me. "You're a woman."

Jack and I became inseparable after that night. He left his wife, and we stayed together for the next four years.

Jack was not the gentle man my officer had been. His love was rougher, sometimes almost brutal.

But I needed this love. Jack and I had our quarrels, yes. Sometimes they were so heated we didn't talk for days. But mostly we laughed together like two kids. And I was contented.

Meanwhile I finished my nursing course and went to work in a very ritzy hospital — it was a private establishment.

The staff was impressed with my bilingualism (my mother, a native of Haiti, spoke French at home) and my excellent skills.

Then I started taking a few singing lessons. My voice instructor told me I sang very much like the late Dinah Washington. But I was even more thrilled when he told me I had the makings of a fine vocalist.

Jack loved to hear me practicing around the apartment.

Miss Eartha, Sarah, Dinah, Pearl Bailey, Lena Horne, he'd call me.

But one night, he didn't come home. Nor the next night, or the next. In all our years together, he hadn't pulled anything like that.

I was frantic with worry. Then, about seven in the evening of the fourth night, he showed up. He was in a rough mood, mean and surly.

I yelled at him, half in anger, half in relief that he was all right. "Where in the hell have you been. I almost went out of my mind with worry."

"Look, you have to let me off the hook once in awhile. I'm not your slave," he yelled back.

"Ok, ok, Jack. But no more games, please."

I decided maybe I had been too possessive. So I started spending more time at my singing lessons and away from Jack.

And I even did a little night nursing to give him more free time. I thought Jack would appreciate the freedom.

He appreciated it all right. It gave him time for an extra-curricular love affair with another woman!

It was the night Jack stayed out until 5 a.m. that I let go.



A lady sings the blues.



A picture of domesticity, Delisa sweeps floor of her apartment.

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continued



Dellisa's low-cut dress, revealing genuine curves, shows how complete her sex-change really was.

From Man To Woman *continued*

I yelled at him, nagged at him, called him every name in the book.

Then he hit me. Just one swift blow, but it was enough. He broke my cheek bone, and my whole face just sort of collapsed.

Strange as it may sound, I loved him in spite of his physical brutality to me.

Besides, I owe Jack a debt for my broken cheek bone. If it hadn't been for that, I wouldn't have met the wonderful doctor who changed my life.

He knew I felt much embarrassment about my nose — it was my one very masculine feature. So he suggested that he could operate and change it into a thinner, feminine nose. And he did a few weeks later.

He also saw to it that I started receiving hormone shots. He believed what other doctors had long told me: nature had played a cruel joke on me. I had a woman's heart and, in many ways, a

woman's body. But it was trapped within a male facade.

But my cell became more feminine with every hormone shot. My body became more shapely, my voice softer and my breasts larger and rounder.

And the whole point of this kind of treatment? To prepare me to go before the necessary authorities and request a sex change operation!

Yes, it was that wonderful plastic surgeon who showed me that with patience and effort, I could have the operation that would change me in body to what I was in my mind and heart — a woman!

He was convinced that surgery was the only answer for me.

I had been to enough psychiatrists and psychologists to know that I wasn't going to adjust to being a man. So I slowly prepared myself for what would prove to be the most agonizing experience of my life.

As a nurse and a patient, I have both seen and experienced pain. But the sex change operation beats anything I have known.

The operation was sheer torture of body and soul, but it was worth it

(Continued Next Month)