inside a man's body

'I hoped the man I married would come back to me'

AFTER 20 years of marriage, Susan Emmerich's husband walked into their home one day and told her he wanted to become a woman.

Her life became "a living hell".

Shocked and frightened by her husband's sudden death this week, the 38-year-old Berea woman this week recalled her life with Melvyn, who became Michelle.

She said she was forced to watch as her husband grew breasts and walked around the house in women's clothing.

While Susan appeared genuinely devastated by her husband's death, she felt a guilty sense of relief that her bizarre marriage had come to an end and that she was free to start a new life.

But Susan, who has never held a job, is also worried about how her family will survive financially now that the breadwinner is gone.

"I met him when I was 16 and he was a handsome farmer's son. We fell in love and raised five beautiful children together. My eldest daughter, who is 20, is now the mother of her own two children.

"He was a normal man involved in

"But he became increasingly depressed and looked absolutely terrible. It could have been all the drugs he was taking – the hormones, the anti-depressants, the sleeping tablets, the tranquilisers and goodness knows what else.

"For the past seven years we have shared a bedroom, but I had no idea what went on in his head. I didn't ask about his private life, where he went at night, or whom he was seeing.

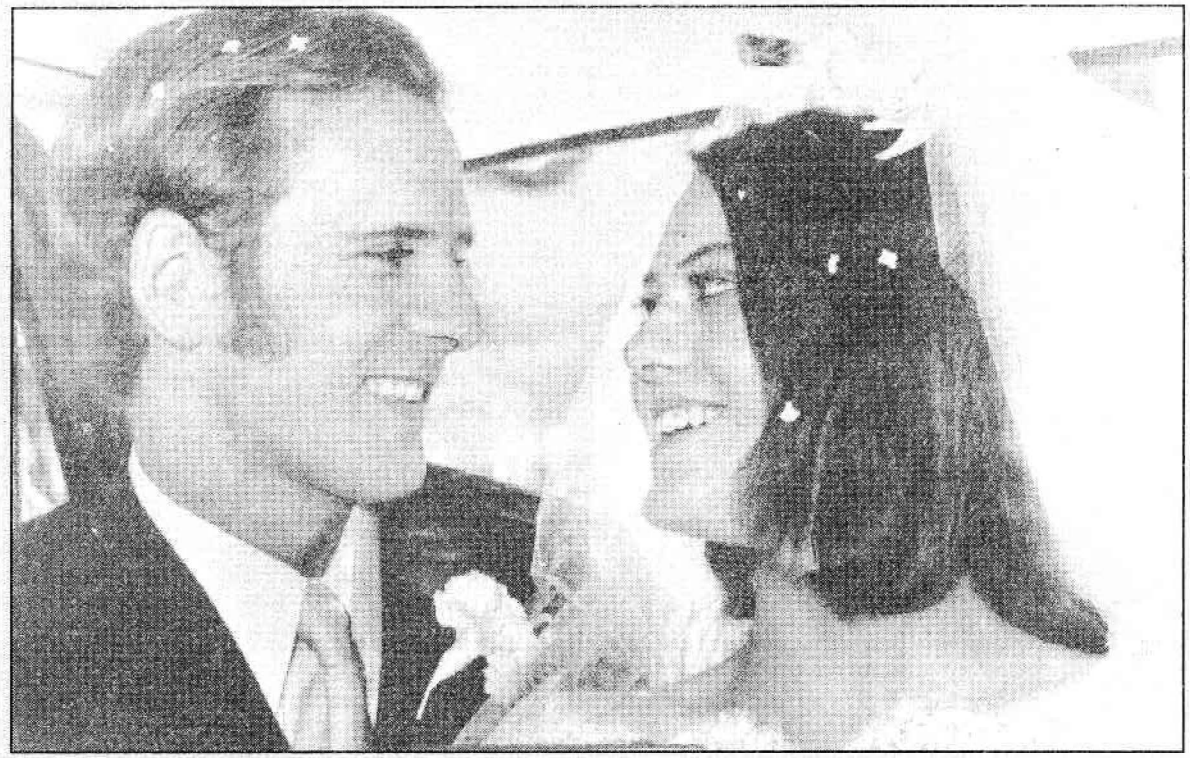
"He did not like it if I tried to go out with other men, mainly friends. He would drug my coffee with sleeping tablets or something, which made me feel sick. But I soon realised what he was doing.

"But, no matter what, I really loved Melvyn. He will always be Melvyn, my husband, to me.

"Maybe at the bottom of my heart I thought the man I married would come back to me.

"It was really hard to deal with Melvyn because he had so many emotional problems. He could not open up and talk, so he kept everything bottled up inside him."

Part of the problem was his upbringing. His father, a fruit farmer in the northern Transvaal, died



HAPPIER TIMES ... Melvyn and Susan Emmerich on their wedding day.

Pietersburg.

"Once he decided to open up and admit he was a transsexual, his mother and sister thought he was possessed by the devil and his family rejected him totally. When he died they told me to burn his clothes to get rid of evil spirits."

His youngest children, three boys aged from 10 years to 17, took their father's gender change in their stride.

"Everyone has problems in their families – maybe ours were a bit more unusual, but our father would sit down and talk to us about what he was.

"And he was still our father, helping us with our homework, getting involved in our interests and giving us advice.

"He always used to tell us to speak to him if we had any problems and he would try to help us,"

more about the "woman" they did not want to know.

It will take Susan days to read Melvyn's heart-breaking personal correspondence which he kept tied up in a large red bow. He wanted his wife to read it after his death in the hope that she would gain insight into his problem and learn to forgive him.

There were many photographs depicting the life of "Michelle" – but

"He was a normal man involved in a man's world – first farming and then mining. How was I to know that one day he would want to be a woman?

"He was very sensitive and, later in life, became depressed. But I was so busy

mer in the northern Transvaal, died when he was young and he was raised by his very strict mother. He spent most of his school life in a strict Catholic boarding school in

stride.

The eldest son, Benjamin, said at first people might have teased them about being "moffies", but most of the boys just accepted it.

and he would try to help us," Benjamin said.

Since Melvyn/Michelle's death, the family has been going through his personal belongings, finding out

depicting the life of "Michelle" – but the pictures the family treasure most were taken a decade ago where they gathered together as a normal, happy unit.

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"He was very sensitive and, later in life, became depressed. But I was so busy being a mother that I never really noticed he was changing – or that our sex life was sliding.

"It was only when he became impotent seven years ago that I thought something was amiss. I thought he was having an affair. So we started to fight. Things became tense around the house.

Angry

"Then, about two years ago, he told me he was a woman trapped in a man's body.

"I was angry and hurt. How is a wife supposed to cope with that? I felt rejected – as if there was something wrong with me – and I kept wondering what I had done to make him like this.

"It was terrible. I couldn't understand him. The children were completely confused.

"I was bitter. I had lost a husband. My children had lost a father. Yes, we fought constantly and said awful things to each other. I couldn't stop myself. He was sick. I don't really know how we survived.

"At the beginning of this year, he moved out for four months. But he missed me and the children so much that he decided to come back.

"At that point the children and I agreed that the only way to handle it was just to accept him the way he was. And we hoped it would make him happy.

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MASSIVE JEWELLERY AUCTION SALE

R1 000 000 WORTH OF JEWELLERY TO BE LIQUIDATED

95% WITHOUT RESERVE

RINGS ★ CHAINS ★ EARRINGS ★ WATCHES ★ DIAMONDS ★ BRACELETS

136 GOLD RINGS

EXAMPLES:

9 ct and 18 ct Dress Rings, Wedding Rings with Diamond, Ruby, Sapphire, Topaz, Emerald, Tourmaline, Pearl, Aquamarine (Cluster, Eternity, Antique, Solitaire).

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AT THE ROSEBANK HOTEL (Melrose Room)
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SALE 1 ON: Sunday, 31st October 1993, at 11 am SHARP

SALE 2 ON: Sunday, 31st October 1993, at 8 pm SHARP

VIEW: On day of sales (from 9 am).

20 FINE MEN'S AND LADIES' WRIST WATCHES

EXAMPLES:

Rolex day/date 18 ct gold, Rolex date just gold/steel, Rolex CMT master steel date, Rolex Seadweller date steel, Rolex date just blue dial steel, Rolex submariner date, Rolex oyster perpetual, Rolex steel on leather ertc.

CHAINS:	79 x 9 ct and 18 ct — Rope, Curb, S-Link, Anchor, Marine, Blecher, Duble Link, Foxtail, Fancy Flat, Gucci, Herring Bone, etc.
EARRINGS:	91 x Gold, Diamonds, Pearl, Ruby, Sapphire, Cameo, Roman Coins, etc.
BRACELETS:	79 x 9 ct and 18 ct — Curb, Figaro, Curb Chain, Rubies, Diamond, etc.
DIAMONDS:	2,01 JVVS2, 1,55IVS1, 1,44DS1, 1,024JVS2, 1,06KVS1, 1,02JVVS2, 1,32KS12, 1,07IS12, 1,01IVS2, 0,91EVVS1, 0,73JSJ2, 0,70VVS2, 0,80P1, 0,60HVVS1, 0,65IVS2, 0,52JVVS1 etc. Parcel Emerals 14,96, Parcel Emeralds 17,08.

AUCTIONEER'S NOTE:
What an opportunity with Christmas around the corner!!

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