TRANSADVOCATE

In Memory of Terri Williams Moore (1941-1976)

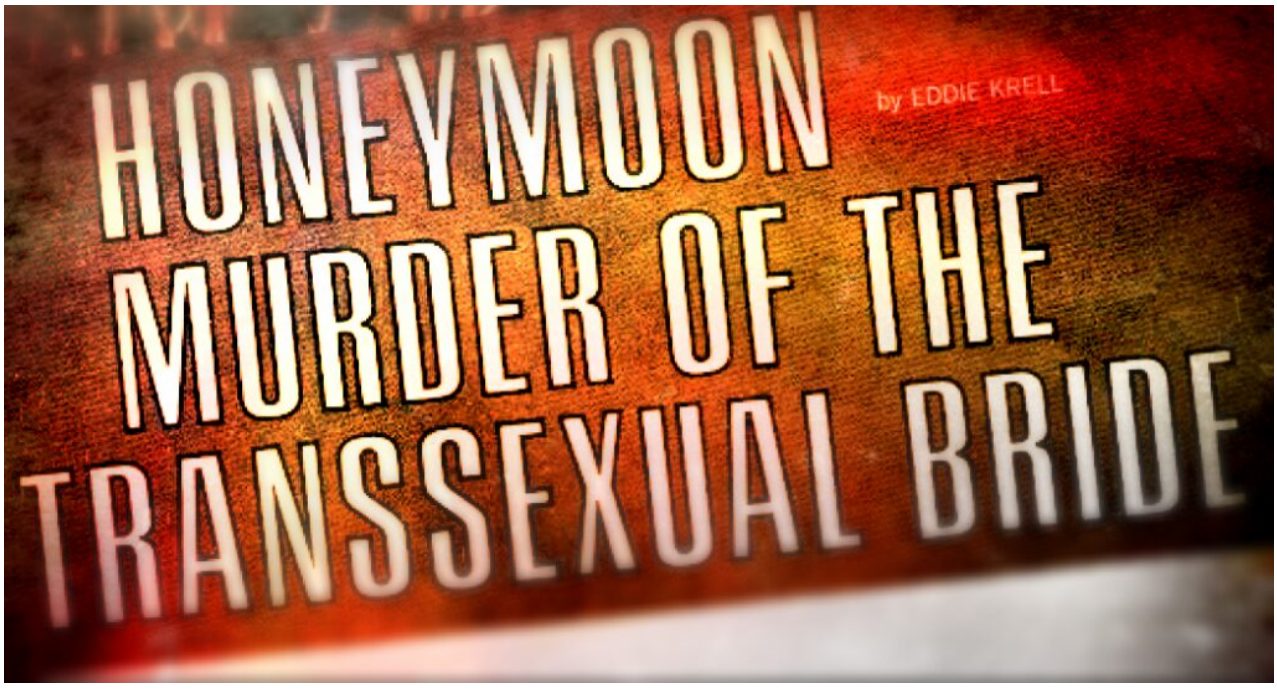
By Kat

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Abstract

A trans historian considers the backward progress of the way media represents our dead. By Kat If you are thinking of transitioning but have yet to start the process you have probably spent some time looking for 'trans stuff.' Yes, that would include information about how to about the transition process medically and legally; I'm just old enough [...]

Article



A trans historian considers the backward progress of the way media represents our dead.

By Kat

If you are thinking of transitioning but have yet to start the process you have probably spent some time looking for 'trans stuff.' Yes, that would include information about how to about the transition process medically and legally; I'm just old enough to remember when the Erickson Educational Foundation pamphlets (remember those?) weren't too far out of date.

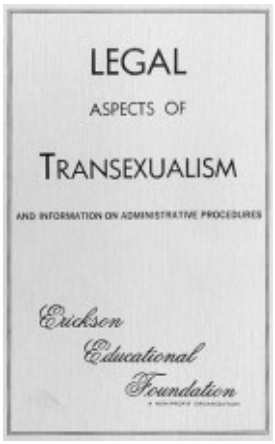


Figure 1. EEF - Legal

But for many people that also includes finding - and keeping copies of - items about transitioning and/or people who have transitioned.

Old newspaper articles...

Old magazine articles...

That was the extent of it when I was young and feeling helpless, blocked from going forward. No internet. Even finding old news items from outside your locality on microfilm - if you knew of their existence - was a daunting task. But now there are audio and video clips, internet searches, etc.

Even in the internet age though, some folks look for the older, more obscure items - things that never found their way into searchable databases. (I have to do that - and luckily I enjoy it; I'm working on a doctorate in trans history, but plenty of other folks out there do so also.) Yes, there are plenty of ways to access vintage mainstream news items about Christine Jorgensen, April Ashley, Renee Richards and many others. Less so for news coverage about the life - and death - of Terri Williams Moore.

Today, May 20th, will mark the passage of forty years since she was murdered somewhere along Interstate 80 in Iowa - between Walcott (at the far western edge of the Quad Cities metro area) and the Lynnville exit, where her body was dumped along with her dogs, at least one of which was still alive at the time.

There is one well-known magazine article out there about Terri. If you've ever looked for 'trans stuff,' you've either seen references to it, seen scans of the article or perhaps even run across a physical copy of the magazine in which the article appeared. Copies surface on EBay from time to time. I found mine at a used bookstore in Minnesota several years ago.

If you've encountered it, you remember it - or, at the very least, you remember the title.

"Honeymoon Murder of the Transsexual Bride"

Calling that 'triggering' would be an understatement.

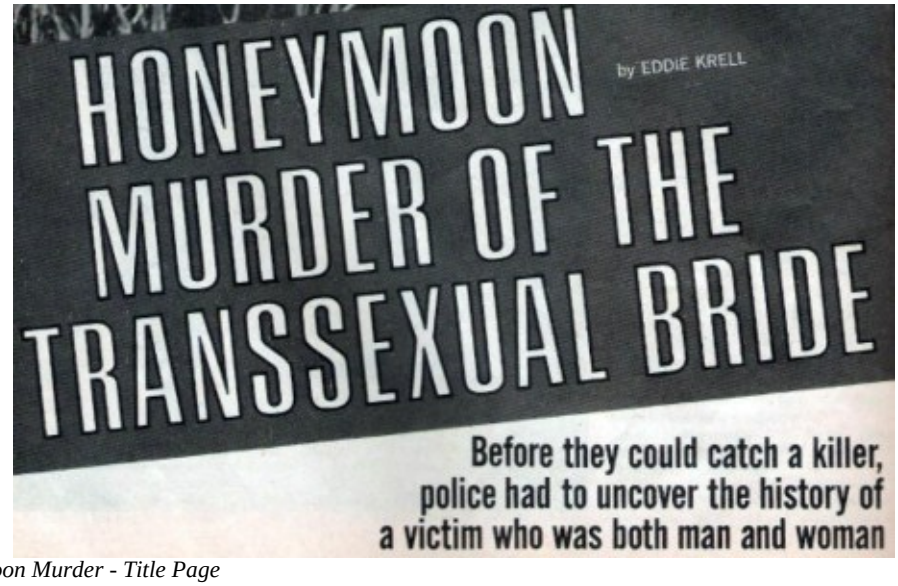


Figure 2. Honeymoon Murder - Title Page

It's a title, subtitle and font size that only diseased spawn decanted during a black mass orgy involving Kris Jenner, Ray Blanchard, Lierre Keith, Mat Staver, Germaine Greer, Paul McHugh, Alice Dreger and Franklin Graham could love.

Yet calling the article following that title page transphobic actually would be a gross injustice. The article appeared in the September 1976 edition of Inside Detective, the sort of trashy 'true crime' magazine that long ago ceded cultural ground to cable television garbage fare such as Nancy Grace and the never-ending stream of Lockup features that MSNBC pollutes its weekend late night hours with.

Authorship of the article is given to Eddie Krell. Maybe he was transphobic; maybe he wasn't. I have no idea. Hell, I have no idea if that was even the person's real name - or if 'Eddie' was even a 'he'. I do find the name listed in the writing credits for a 1979 hack-n-slash movie titled Delirium. But beyond that? I actually know more about the subject(s) of the Inside Detective article than I do about Krell.

The article does include some terminology and phraseology that, if it appeared in the reportage of a trans murder today, probably would spark, if not outrage, then certainly some cringing.

But keep in mind that it was 1976.

And also try to keep it all in perspective. If you ever have the opportunity to read the entirety of Krell's article, please do so. I'm as quick as anyone to point the finger at transphobia when I see it, but I've read "Honeymoon Murder of the Transsexual Bride" many times and used it in trans history classes I've taught - and I don't see any in that article. There is an occasional male pronoun, but that is something that, like it or not, is unavoidable when stringing together a life narrative involving key events both post- and pre-transition. Krell wrote the article about - and referred to - a murdered, post-op trans woman.

That is significant because even now there is no certainty that the next trans woman who is unfortunate enough to have her life end in a manner similar to how Terri's ended will be treated by the media with the dignity that Terri received from Inside Detective, from the local media and - from what

I've been told by many who were there and a descendant of someone who was there - the locals of Newton, Iowa.

I know that many out there would prefer that nothing be mentioned of any trans person's past when dealing with the person's death. Whether right or wrong, let us just assume that that idealistic goal is not going to happen. With that assumption in mind, read the following:

DES MOINES - A woman found murdered on a highway near here has been identified as a police informer who started life as a male, police said yesterday after issuing a warrant for the arrest of her husband.

Police identified the victim as Terry Williams, 34 of Denver, Colo., formerly a police informant in Lansing, Mich. She had been shot in the head and back.

Warren Stump, assistant director of the Iowa Bureau Criminal Investigation, said "Legally and medically, the victim is classified as a female though born as a male."

He said a murder warrant in connection with the death had been issued for Richard Moore, 26, of Denver, who, according to a marriage license found on the victim's body, married Williams on May 14 in Denver.

That was the entirety of a Reuters wire service item, as it appeared in the Miami News, on May 25th. If you judge it in a 2016 light and come away irked, also be honest. Forget the "y" for "i" and think about how likely it is that you would find at least some news items on such a murder in 2016 being just as sensationalistic (sticking "Transsexual" in the title when not relevant) while not using female pronouns but placing the word "married" in scare quotes.

Yes, I collect 'trans stuff.'

Yes, I'm working on a doctorate in trans legal history.

But as a trans woman what has always intrigued me most about the Krell article and the local news items about the murder and resulting trial was that dignity - and how instead of becoming more likely in coverage of murders of trans people in the years since 1976 it has become less likely.

Dan Savage may have cashed in on a certain catchphrase, but here's the reality: It does not always get better.

One of the times I thumbed through the pages of Inside Detective was in 2002, after digesting the monstrously erasive coverage of the murder of Gwen Araujo.

Eventually it became more likely to see news items referring to "Gwen Araujo" rather than "Eddie 'Gwen' Araujo" or just "Eddie Araujo."

But the erasive is how the coverage began.

In California.

Ultra-liberal California.

A quarter-century after Terri Williams Moore's murder.

Think the pattern of inverse progress is imaginary?



Transgender man killed in Hub

No signs of forced entry in William 'Rita' Hester's apartment, police say

by Scott A. Giordano
Bay Windows staff

Family and friends of William "Rita" Hester remember the 33-year-old transgender person as someone who was vivacious and full of life and love, someone who hated violence and someone whose life ambition "was to be a star."

The Boston Police Department (BPD) and Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph Martin's office are investigating the homicide of Hester, a gay man who lived as "Rita" and was found stabbed to death in his Allston apartment on Nov. 28.

Meanwhile, about 75 people gathered at the Arlington Street Church on Dec. 1 to plan a community response to the publicity surrounding Hester's death, which they believe was based on a combination of anti-black, anti-gay and anti-gender bias.

"I personally believe my brother's death was a hate crime," said Diana Hester, a resident of Winchester, Conn., who was at the Dec. 1 meeting in Boston. "There was no forced entry in [my brother's] apartment, and my brother wasn't a violent person."

Also in attendance was William Hester's brother, who asked his name not be used in this article. The brother said he believes the crime may have been motivated by hate because "Rita" was stabbed about 20 times in the chest, because "Rita" was wearing all his gold jewelry when he was found

Continued on page 19

William "Rita" Hester, who was found dead in his Allston apartment on Nov. 28

Figure 3. Bay Windows - 19981203 - p1

That was front-page coverage of the murder of Rita Hester - in the Dec. 3, 1998 edition of the LGB( ) publication Bay Windows. Some people quoted in the item did refer to Rita as Rita - sans trans-scare quotes - and with
female pronouns. But the editorial decision was a murder in its own right, a conscious choice to kill her a second time and justify it as gay purity (d/b/a some unnamed wholly-owned subsidiary of editor Jeff Epperly) standing its ground against “the thought police in the transgender community,” “the political agendas of people such as local media gadfly Nancy Nangeroni,” and “the Queer Theory crowd.”

I found Epperly’s ground-standing via the Way Back Machine as recently as three years ago, but when I looked for a
live link while writing this column, it appears as though access has been blocked.

“On the Death of William ‘Rita’ Hester” can be found behind an EBSCO pay wall. I could possibly finagle a copy, but for me and other trans people, the abstract of the article says as much as anything else Epperly may have said in 1998.

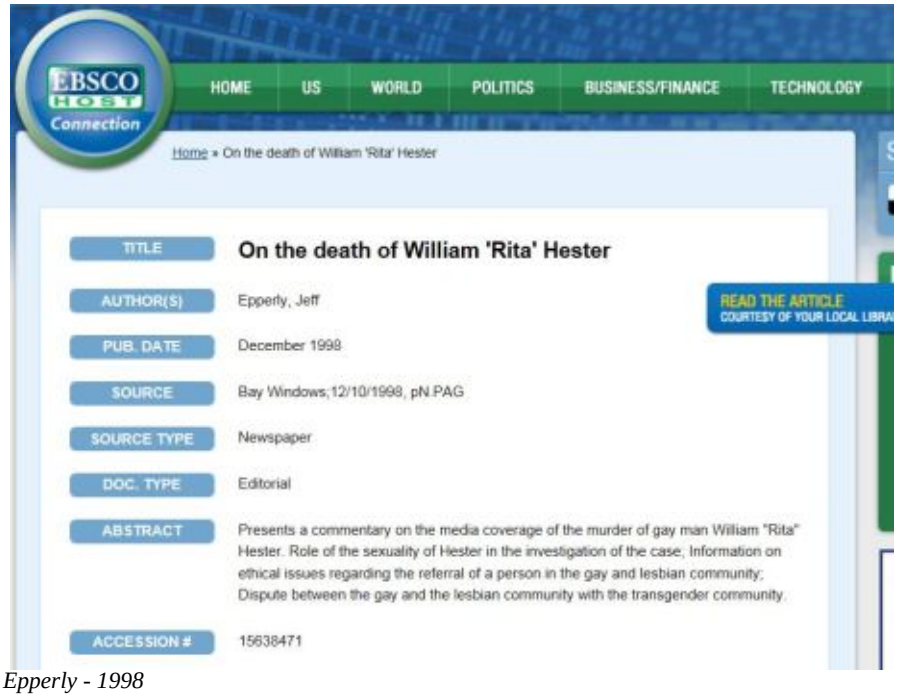


Figure 4. EBSCO - Epperly - 1998

...the murder of gay man William “Rita” Hester.

End of story - as far as Epperly cared.

But keep in mind that those sorts of databases are, among other things of course, what the current generation of academic-wannabes utilize when creating the scholarship that the next generation of academic-wannabes will utilize - and, perhaps more importantly, the scholarship that the current generation of Ph.D. -clad, media-accessible - and rarely trans (and even more rarely trans women) - pundits use when forming the opinions that they eagerly spew when MSNBC, CNN and Fox ‘News’ come a-callin’.

Not to pick solely on LGB( ) media (and complicit academic databases), let us move back to Iowa - this time in 2003 and in the far western portion of the state:

Police still search for leads in stabbing case

By Courtney Brummer | Posted Aug 6, 2003

Council Bluffs police are still looking for information regarding the stabbing death of a 32-year-old Omaha man.

Nelson Alvarez-Hernandez, 32, of Omaha was found unconscious and bleeding heavily on the lawn at 1613 S. 13th St. in the early morning hours of July 31.

He died soon after at Creighton University Hospital.

...

Alvarez-Hernandez was “openly gay,” according to [Detective Todd] Weddum and went by several

aliases, both male and female. Weddum said Alvarez-Hernandez actually preferred to go by the name “Selena,” and he was a cross-dresser.

That was from the Daily Nonpareil, from Council Bluffs, just across the Missouri River from Omaha. This was the photo which ran in the online version of the article as it still appeared in 2005.



Figure 5. DNP - 20030806 - Selena Alvarez photo

By August 18, 2003, the victim was: Nelson “Selena” Alvarez-Hernandez.

Still a gay man.

By September 7, the Daily Nonpareil was using the name Selena Alvarez-Hernandez... under an article title:

Vigil Held for Slain Transgender Male

The article reminded all that Selena’s “family preferred to call him Nelson.”

As my friend Gwen Smith has long pointed out, a few months before Selena Alvarez-Hernandez’s murder when, after decades and decades more of life than Gwen Araujo, Rita Hester and Selena were able to enjoy, Bob Hope died, no media of any platform made any reference to “Leslie Townes ‘Bob’ Hope.”

Or whether any of Hope’s relatives preferred to call him Leslie.

And I can’t recall a single headline more recently that read: Prince Rogers Nelson Dies at 57.

It was just Prince.

And when the time comes, it will be just Cher.

And just Madonna.

But in 2003, Terri Williams Moore had been dead for 27 years. It seems a sure bet that none of her family preferred to call her Terri - then or back in 1976.

Authorities said no one from Denver, Michigan or anywhere else had claimed the body. County Attorney Ken Whitehead applied for a court order to bury the murder victim. She was buried as Mrs. Terri Williams Moore, at the expense of Jasper County. No one from Denver or Michigan attended the funeral for the unwanted bride.

That was the final paragraph of Krell's article, but it wasn't the end of the story.

Nor was it the beginning.

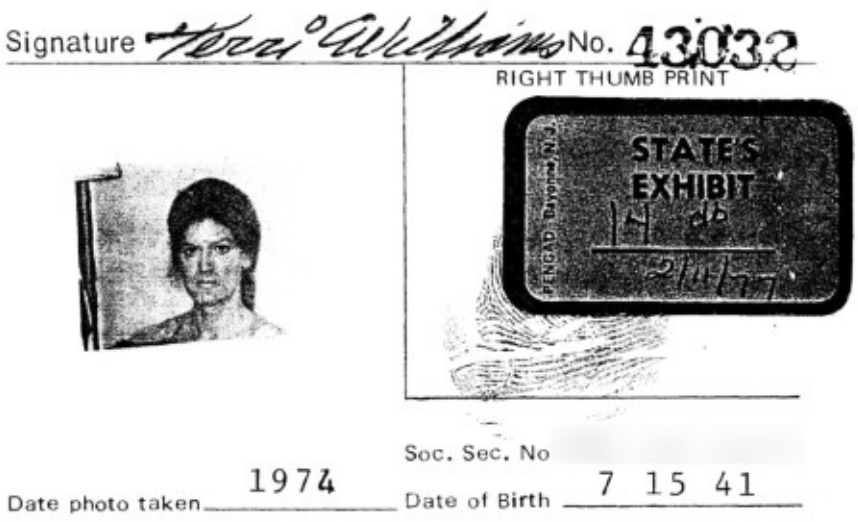


Figure 6. Terri Williams 1974 ID Card

That is Terri as she appeared on a 1974 Michigan (presumably at least; elsewhere I'd assumed it to be Colorado, but I don't think that would fit the timeline) identification card.

There are other photos of her out there - including the ones in "Honeymoon Murder." In the ID card, however, she's alive and presumably well - also presumably thinking to herself that there's more in the top of her hourglass than in the bottom.

She would have been wrong, of course.

At some point after her SRS she moved out to Colorado. She married Richard Moore on May 14, 1976 in Denver. They honeymooned back in Michigan. Only Richard made it back to Colorado alive. On May 20, along I-80 in Iowa on that trip back Richard killed Terri.

Her life had been eventful. She had succeeded in securing her SRS in Michigan via public funding - which hadn't gone over well with the legislature. Arguably, however, she had done plenty to aid a key aim of government - law enforcement - to earn it.

What is probably a variant of the Reuters item (or more likely what the Reuters item was derived from) had appeared in the Des Moines Register on May 21st. It did mention that she was transsexual (actually, the article did a bit more than mention it), but it sensationalized the other aspect of her life.



Slain woman reported to have been informant

By NICK LAMBERTO
Register Staff Writer

The person found shot to death near the Lynville exit of Interstate Highway 80 Thursday morning has been identified as a possible police informant who testified as a prosecution witness in a Florida murder trial several years ago.

Warren Stump, assistant director of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation said the person was "legally and medically, a female," but had been born a male and undergone a sex-change operation several years ago.

A murder warrant has been issued for Richard Allen Moore, 26, of Denver, Colo.

Figure 7. DMR - 19760521

Krell clearly used that and other news articles to piece together his own, but his encapsulation of Terri's connection to the Lansing Police Department (and beyond) works as well as any.

Terri Williams had been flown to Florida to testify at the man's trial. Conviction and the death penalty had followed.

Long ago I did some LEXIS searches which didn't definitively point me to the Florida case. Nevertheless, I did eventually come to presume that the murderer in question was Gary Eldon Alvord. Florida does indeed have a lot of crime - perhaps even more triple murders than it would like. But I was always willing to bet that it doesn't have a slew of triple murders that involve jewelry theft and that require the testimony of a detective from the Lansing Police Department.

The Florida Supreme Court's first opinion upholding Alvord's death sentence can be found at 322 So. 2d 533, issued on Sept. 17, 1975. It includes much in the way of technical and legal jargon (Alvord not only was attacking the physical evidence against him, he also was asserting mental incompetence and he was challenging the constitutionality of Florida's capital punishment framework), but there are bits of testimony. One bit of that involved Lansing Police Detective Donald Dufour recounting Alford, upon being implicated in a theft, asserting "I am a rapist, not a God-damn thief" as a character defense. Then, there was testimony from Alvord's girlfriend, Zelma Hurley. According to her, the night after the murders he'd told her "I had to rub out three people last night." She asked who the three people were. "Ann, Lynn and her Mom," he responded.

Those victims were Lynn Herrmann, her mother Ann Herrman, and her grandmother Georgia Tully. At the time of the murders in 1973, Lynn was eighteen.

I italicized “first” above for a reason. As it turns out, when I was doing my research on the case ages ago I hadn’t cast my cyber-net wide enough. Alvord’s case went up and down the ladders of the state and federal court systems numerous times - most due to his incompetency claim. I recently stumbled across a brief submitted to the Florida Supreme Court in 1988. It contains summaries of much of the testimony against him. And at the end of one paragraph one finds this sentence:

Terri Williams who had seen the defendant in Detroit, Michigan on June 25, 1973, testified that the defendant had in his possession at that time a small woman’s diamond watch with a stretch band.

The Florida Supreme Court hadn’t mentioned Terri in the opinion in Alvord’s case that came out during her lifetime, but its 1989 sequel, which can be found at 541 So. 2d 598, quoted that paragraph in full. (She is mentioned in one federal court opinion as well, Alvord v. Wainwright, 564 F. Supp. 459 (M.D. Fla. 1983))

In case anyone with strong anti-death penalty feelings is wondering, Alvord is dead.

However, Terri’s testimony did not play any role in triggering an execution. The sum of all of Alvord’s appeals worked - at least in running out the clock. By the time he died in prison three years ago he had attained the informal title of the nation’s longest-serving death row inmate.

Was his claim of incompetence valid?

Over the years, Alvord made outlandish claims such as believing he “was tortured by communist agents out to destroy the Polish race” and that “communist transsexual agents tried to poison his food.”

That doesn’t fully answer the question - but it is something of a sad preface. Assuming that Alvord did have some legitimate mental problems, he was not the last such person who Terri would encounter.

It is at this point, that the story needs to turn to Richard Moore - the man she married in Colorado, the man she would honeymoon with back in Michigan and the man who would kill her.

And the man who would be convicted of first-degree murder for killing her.

Several years ago I visited the Jasper County Courthouse in Newton, where the murder trial took place. I was able to peruse the State v. Moore casefile. This is an excerpt from one of the more recent items therein:

August 6, 1991

Dear Clerk of Court, Judge,

I was found guilty of 1st degree murder in 1977. My name is Richard Allan Moore. My trial was in Newton, Iowa.

Before my trial, before I was found guilty, I was sentenced to death. I was in my cell in the jail in Newton when I was sentenced to death. The F.B.I. states in some paperwork that the invasion of my privacy is unwarranted.

I was removed from my cell and operated on. I want my head and body returned to me. I want to know about any injuries, wounds from criminal violence, I received prior to surgery. My brain may have been taken out of my head and put in this head. This head was then sewn to this body. My medical records can prove the truth.

There is more, but I'm sure you get the idea.

Does it prove anything? No.

On the other hand, here is something more contemporaneous with the murder and trial:

Operator: From a wire tapper, will you accept?

Moore: Richard Moore/John Cash

FBI: Yeah, alright.

Moore: Okay, this is the FBI in Des Moines?

FBI: Yes.

Moore: Okay, I'd like to talk to an agent in person. I'm in a, hang on just a minute, Newton, I'm in Newton, Iowa, and I'm incarcerated here and I've got a wiretap vehicle and I have some things I would like to discuss.

...

FBI: A no agents in right now. I'll try to get the agent that handles your territory there ..

Moore: Okay well when would I be able to see him?

FBI: Maybe today.

Moore: Alright, well you've got a complete file on my activities a Clarence Kelly, J. Edgar Hoover.

FBI: What's your name sir?

Moore: Richard Allan Moore.

FBI: A l l a n?

Moore: Right. You'll find Hoover in Colorado Springs his name is Riley he's a postman that had been a police officer in Denver, Colorado under a different name. And I would like to speak to an agent as soon as possible.

That is a portion of the transcript of a call Richard made from jail to the FBI.

Among other things, Richard claimed to be Johnny Cash.

And, no, I have no idea if the real Johnny Cash knew anything about Richard Moore or his claim.

Not surprisingly, of course, Richard Moore attempted an insanity defense. He had a good attorney who was able to provide him a competent defense. His name was Dennis Chalupa (the "Ch" pronounced as a "K.") In 1976 he was a young attorney, recently into private practice - though he nevertheless had

already served as Jasper County Attorney for a brief time.



D. F. Chalupa Becomes Partner in Law Firm

Dennis F. Chalupa, a native of Pleasant Plain, has become a partner in the law firm of Brierly, McCall and Girdner.

The firm henceforth will be known as Brierly, McCall, Girdner and Chalupa.

Chalupa came to Newton in 1970, was appointed Jasper County attorney to fill an unexpired term and then was elected to a 2-year term, serving as county attorney in 1971 and 1972.

He has been associated with the law firm of Brierly, McCall and Girdner since August, 1971.

Chalupa was a 1962 graduate of Fairfield Community High School, received a bachelor of arts degree in business administration in 1966 from Parsons College at Fairfield, and was employed as a cost analyst for the Bendix Corporation in Teterboro, N.J. for a year before attending law school at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. He received his juris doctor degree from Iowa in 1970.

Chalupa is a member of the American Bar Association, the Iowa State Bar Association, the Jasper County Bar Association and the Association of Trial Lawyers of Iowa.

He and his wife, Georgienne, are the parents of two children, Michelle and Chad.

Dennis F. Chalupa

Figure 8. Newton Daily News - 19760109 - Chalupa

He died in 2013. In 2005 I contacted him to chat about the case. I had no idea what to expect, but we had a very nice conversation about as much of the case as attorney-client confidentiality would allow him to. Indeed, the strategy was for an insanity defense - which Chalupa felt was valid (and I'm not certain he was wrong) and would have been successful had Moore been cooperative to any degree.

This is an extract from the Iowa Supreme Court's opinion upholding Moore's conviction:

During a state psychiatrist's testimony the following occurred:

Q. What, if any, was Richard Moore's response when he was told that you didn't believe him?

A. He became somewhat glum when he got those messages, irritable, demanding and made threats, and within a short time was demanding his discharge and if he wouldn't get discharged he would take a hostage and leave.

THE DEFENDANT: You're a liar.

Trial court made no comment. The witness finished his answer and answered another question. Defense counsel requested a recess. Defendant said, "I think - take this court and shove it." Trial court ordered a recess that lasted thirty-five minutes.

Trial resumed and nine questions later this exchange occurred:

Q. Doctor, from the background I've given you earlier, in your testimony Mr. Moore has stated on repeated occasions that he works for the Denver Police Department and these

THE DEFENDANT: Martin down there, Lieutenant Callig down there, too.

THE COURT: Mr. Moore, will you please remain silent. We will maintain order during

THE DEFENDANT: This ain't a court.

THE COURT: - of this trial.

THE DEFENDANT: This is bullshit.

THE COURT: If you continue with your outbursts, you will be removed from this courtroom.

THE DEFENDANT: Remove me. Big deal. I ain't interested in your courtroom, flying your bombs and your bullshit. You want to bomb, you bomb it yourselves

THE COURT: May the record show that the defendant

THE DEFENDANT: - or being your funky President.

THE COURT: - has been removed from the courtroom by the sheriff and the deputy sheriff. This trial will continue without the presence of the defendant being present.

And, the following can be found in the portions of the trial transcript that were utilized in Moore's brief to the Iowa Supreme Court:

Q. Richard, did you tell Detective Erickson that you were Johnny Cash?

A. Yes I did.

Q. Why?

A. Because I am.

Q, Could you explain that?

A. That's one of the names I sing under. I don't always make personal appearances. In other words, there is other people that can sing, whatever, on stage. I don't - flamboyances, things of this nature. I'm not that interested in showmen, whatever.

Strongly suggestive of the guy having some serious issues? Yes.

Definitive proof of legal insanity? No.

But we all know that the legal system is rigged against all but the richest of defendants. (The legendary Ray Hill's assessment of Texas' criminal 'justice' system - that one is guilty until proven rich - is not, of course, limited to Texas.) And we all know that plenty of mentally challenged people have been railroaded through that legal system. Yet we also know that more than a few murderers have gotten away

with killing trans women. I've long wondered whether Richard Moore might be one of the people who have been denied a legitimate insanity defense. I have no answer; I just wonder.

And in case anyone is wondering about another popular defense among those charged with crimes against trans women...

No, there was not a 'trans panic' defense.

Chalupa told me that there was some genuine question as to whether Moore knew about Terri's transition history, but clearly that was not the focus of the case (there is some suggestion that, while on the honeymoon in Michigan, Terri spent more time hanging out with her old friends than with her new husband - not a justification for violence of any kind, but it is pretty easy to see how that might have led to some negative feelings between the two.) I don't know if he would have been willing to 'go there' if need be, but he did go to bat for Moore, so...who knows. However, Chalupa also told me that this was not his only case involving trans issues. He defended a trans woman in a criminal case and successfully managed to keep her transition history from being introduced by the prosecution to poison the jury.

He didn't mention where that case was tried. But State v. Moore took place in Newton, Iowa, which is not known as a particularly liberal part of Iowa.

Terri's transsexuality was part of the trial, but it was not put on trial - a big distinction. Several folks who worked at the Jasper County Courthouse in 2004 when I visited there remembered the trial. They were all clear on this: Yes, everyone was aware that the victim was a trans woman - but what they were appalled by was that she was killed on her honeymoon.

I mentioned above that I'd since encountered a descendant of someone who was there for the trial. He was one of my students in the trans history class I taught for several years at the University of Iowa.

On a Monday following the class session in which I'd discussed the case, a student came up to me began telling me about his weekend. He'd gone home to visit his family in Newton - and he'd told them about having dealt with the case in class.

At this point my stomach sank. I immediately expected his next words to be "My uncle is Steve King, and...."

But it didn't happen that way.

Instead, he learned from his parents that his grandfather had served on the jury in Richard Moore's trial. The story he was told echoed what I'd heard from the folks at the courthouse in 2004.

What mattered was the murder.

Period.

Terri Williams Moore's life story - pieced together as it is from chunks of litigation from Iowa and Florida - indicates that she was, pretty much, an average person. Yes, she knew some shady people - but be honest with yourselves: How many of us don't? Maybe she knew some a bit shadier than those most of us will encounter, but when the time came to stand up and do what was right, she stood up and did what was right - as to Gary Alvord and apparently others as well. And it is reasonable to ask why she was in

the position of knowing the particular shady people that she informed on. Yet, it wasn't any of those characters who killed her. It was her husband.

Forty years on, though, does any of it matter?

No one from Denver or Michigan attended the funeral for the unwanted bride.

Yes, Terri Williams Moore matters. Trans people of previous generations matter.

Laura Jane Grace is getting quite a bit of recognition for burning her birth certificate on stage at a concert in Durham, North Carolina and rightly so. "The way you effect change is by empowering the grass-roots movement," she told the crowd, "by empowering the people."

In light of HB2, its hard not to understand why she burned her birth certificate at the show.

But trans folk of a different generation - Terri's generation - effected change by empowering the people by allowing trans people to be trans people. And in 1976, that often meant stealth or quasi-stealth.

One historical inflection point regarding Terri's murder was that it took place during an interstitial period in Iowa law. Earlier in the year, the legislature had passed the bill that would become the state's transsexual birth certificate statute. A Republican governor signed the bill and it was awaiting its effective date in July - which was a few weeks before what would have been Terri's 35th birthday.

Now, it wouldn't have helped her with her birth certificate as she wasn't born in Iowa. But Michigan enacted its law two years later.

And the state in which Grace pyrotechnically yelled, "Goodbye gender!"? It did so a year before Iowa.

Yes, these laws generally privileged surgery (Iowa's has some wiggle room) and came into existence via trans people walking hand-in-hand with the trans medical establishment of the day...

To which I say: So?

Yes, these laws were eagerly utilized by trans people whose desire was to outwardly fit within the gender binary...

To which I say: So?

If that's not what your goal is in 2016, then fine. But don't denigrate the folks of decades past (or decade current for that matter) who seek that goal. Not only was that their right, the laws also are something without which the legal landscape of today would look quite different.

They allowed trans people to live and function in the real world decades before anything that the current generation points to as 'tipping points' or a certain subset of that generation calls 'robust' protections. The existence of the 1975 North Carolina law forced that state's anti-trans legislators of 2016 into a corner that they might not even have known they were putting themselves into. The anti-trans legislators relied on the existence of that 1975 law to justify HB2's birth certificate mandate.

No, that's not surgery-privileging snark on my part. Anything but, in fact. The legislators who rammed

HB2 through may have known about North Carolina's own law but I doubt seriously if they even thought about the laws in other states that do not privilege surgery (or, for that matter, people in any state who have managed to secure a post-transition birth certificate without the surgical antecedent.)

And, in those other states, when "the grass-roots movement" seeks to modify a 1970s-80s, surgery-privileging birth certificate law to make it usable by those who haven't undergone surgery, remember - even if you have no idea who they are - the folks who engaged in legislative activism, however quietly, to put the law in place that you're wanting to tinker with. The law may need tinkering (sometimes for reasons other than dealing with the surgery requirement), but think about how troublesome your task would be if you were starting from scratch...

In North Carolina...

In 2016.

Terri Williams Moore was part of the past generation. I'm guessing she didn't play a role in Michigan's transsexual birth certificate statute, but had she lived....?

I don't know.

But I do know this: Had she lived she'd be approaching her 75th birthday. And there are people from her generation - and all of the generations preceding the current one - who have been forgotten.

Forgetting our own history via benign neglect gives license to those - outside the LGBT community and, sadly, even inside - who, with malicious desire and nefarious intent, do not want our history to be remembered.

Piss those people off by remembering Terri Williams Moore. Do it in your own way. Perhaps if you're driving west on I-80 this summer, headed to Des Moines, pull off at the Lynnville exit and leave a flower for her. Or, just remember that she existed.



Figure 9. Honeymoon Murder - Dog Page

Or, just remember that her dogs existed. One didn't live long enough for this photo to be taken, but this one did - and the little doggy stood by her on May 20, 1976, when no one else would.

However you might choose to remember Terri and/or her doggies, sadly we have not 'tipped' so far as to make remembering a trans woman who was murdered forty years ago any less of a revolutionary act than burning a birth certificate on stage.

I have no idea what sort of music Terri liked. Perhaps, though, if she was still with us she'd be the sexy hippie (punk?) gramma in the front row at an Against Me! concert when next they play Denver...

Or maybe not.

We won't know.

We can, however, remember.

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https://www.transadvocate.com/in-memory-of-terri-williams-moore-1941-1976_n_16190.htm