

:02 [music in]

:15 SM: This is one of the last parts of the continental United States that is actually still labeled “frontier.”

:24 SM: There’s urban, suburban, rural, and then frontier, and we are frontier.

:34 MB: You have to understand some of the history of the city. Trinidad originally was a western frontier town. With it being a frontier town it also had lots of bars and brothels—and churches. So there was lots of sinning and lots of repenting, I guess you could say.

:56 LE: Trinidad is the spiritual center for transsexuals.

1:08 [music out]

1:08 [music in]

1:57 [music out]

1:57 [marching band]

2:29 Carney: I went to the hospital and they told me they wanted to put me under for some surgery on my knee, and I told them I didn’t want them to put me under because I had heard it was the sex change capital of the world and I wanted to wake up with everything I came with.

2:38 Woman in tank: You’re from Trinidad, the sex change capital of the world? Yes, unfortunately.

2:43 Cowboy: They ask where you’re from and you say “Trinidad, Colorado,” and they’re like, “Oh [laughs], that place.”

2:49 Bearded guy with cap: I wanted to move cuz that shit’s disgusting. I think God made you one way for a reason.

2:55 Guy with blue shirt and sunglasses: They’re not from here. They’re from your neighborhood.

2:58 Woman with umbrella: Everyone from other towns come here to get it. It’s not a town of transsexuals.

3:04 Bearded guy with cap: I’ve got a family member that wants to do that sex change thing. It’s disgusting. I haven’t talked to him in almost a year and a half, cuz when he told me, I told him how I felt about it and he told me how he felt about it, and I told him, “Well, dude, it’s your life, man. I’m not going to be involved with it. It’s your life. Have fun.”

3:28 MB: I’ll just start with a few things and we’ll just kind of see what happens over the course of time.

3:33 MB: My first conference I presented at was IFGE two years ago. As you may know, I’m an OBGYN. I practiced in Seattle, Washington, for thirteen years. I’ve delivered something in the order of 3,000 babies. But I gave all that up, if you can believe it. Much as I love obstetrics, I gave all that up.

3:49 MB: I moved from the bliss of Seattle, Washington, to Trinidad, Colorado, [laughter] which as you can see, trucks outnumber people by about three-to-one.

4:04 MB: I had the blessing to work with an incredible man, Dr. Stanley Biber, for about six months before he stopped doing surgery. There are about 6,000 graduates from Trinidad, Colorado, which for the transgender community kind of became a spiritual place, and of course, the sex change capital of the world.

4:22 [music]

4:25 MB: First stage of memory, age four, wearing my sister’s clothes. Absolutely.

4:37 MB: I was never a boy's boy. I was beaten down, because I was a skinny kid and effeminate. Most people do their best to conform and be mainstream and whatever. So you play the game. You play with the trucks and you build the houses and you do all that stuff and so you become kind of a master of deception.

5:05 MB: And that's what I was. I was very smart so I was very good at it. I didn't let on. I was just very good at that other role.

5:24 MB: Twenty-one years later and I'm head of a huge hospital department. I met somebody who I fell in love with, got married, had kids—all that sort of thing. I really, really tried to be the father and all this stuff. I was putting on all these titles I was supposed to adopt. And it turned out that I felt this emptiness.

5:49 MB: Once my son was conceived, I started on hormones and as a result, he's never really known anyone but Marci. By the time he was born, I already had breast development. I had already had electrolysis. It was the lure of the sea. It was the sirens of the sea. It was going towards the light. It was the moth.

6:09 MB: How could you do this to your family? Okay one, I have suffered. I have suffered more than, they'll ever know. And, if anything, I delayed it as long as I possibly could, but there's a point in life, you know, you only come . . . you only live once. You have got to be true to yourself at some point.

6:35 MB: In performing male-to-female genital reassignment surgery . . .

6:39 [music out]

6:41 MB: The goals that we all seek are, of course, depth, sensitivity, and appearance. Initial pioneer surgeons viewing if you could make a hole that's good enough, now we realize female sexual expression is important, and the clitoris is an essential part of a successful operation.

7:02 [laughter]

7:03 MB: You don't want a vagina like this.

7:05 [laughter]

7:07 My sense is just that it was a cavern. Many of the post-ops were fine if the legs were mostly together, but when you parted the legs you had kind of an appearance like that and sometimes you even got an echo.

7:19 [laughter]

7:20 Not "gender-reassignment surgery," but "genital-reassignment surgery." I think that's the most appropriate name for it. We're not changing gender. Gender is what's there. It's been with us since age three or four years old. We're just simply aligning the genitalia with the gender.

7:38 [applause]

7:41 MB: You know, I kind of came into town without any real introduction. There were rumors that I was taking over Dr. Biber's practice, but the hospital hadn't really gone about telling people.

7:55 Dr. B: It was important for me that Marci remain in Trinidad. I really did want somebody to take over here because it's such a boon to the community and to the hospital.

8:03 [music in]

8:05 Dr. B: I came to Trinidad in 1954. I sojourned down because the United Mine Workers were developing a clinic here for their employees. At one time there were sixty thousand people in this community, all substantiated by coalmines. I was going to stay

here for a year or two and then leave. And so far all of the other members in the clinic are gone and I'm the only one here after fifty years, fifty-two years, in fact, I'm still here.

8:34 Dr. B: See this picture here? I took second in the regional Mr. America contest in Denver in 1957.

8:41 Dr. Biber: I still work out and lift weights. I can shame the kids. I can show—I can out-lift most of them, you know? Pretty good size arms, see?

8:51 [laughs]

8:53 [music out]

8:54 Dr. B: I was sitting at the desk in this office, and a female social worker came in and sat down. At first we talked about the harelips and cleft palates that I was doing for her clients. And then, suddenly, she says, "Well, can you do my surgery?" I was a young surgeon in those days and of course there's no real humbleness in young surgeons, you now? So I said, "Of course I can do your surgery. What do you want done?"

9:23 [music in]

9:24 Dr. B: She says, "I'm a transsexual." Well, my mouth kind of fell open, and I said, "What's that?" [laughs] She had been worked up by Dr. Harry Benjamin, really the father of transsexual syndrome in the world, let alone the United States. He was an internist in New York. He had done a few cases of transsexual conversions with hormone therapy, and he was kind enough to refer me to Dr. Hoopes in Johns Hopkins at that time. He had done about thirteen cases of surgery. Seven of those were simple penectomies, just like Christine Jorgensen had when she had her first surgery in '54. He was kind enough to send me copies of his original hand drawings.

10:12 Dr. B: So, I called the social worker in. I said, "Well, I've never done one, but if you want to do it, I think we can do it." She says, "Let's do it." So we did our very first case, penile scrotal-flap technique. Horrible looking technique, but it was functional. But it looked terrible.

10:36 Dr. B: The local people's reaction at first worried me, because we didn't know how it would be received. I started in a Catholic hospital, and I didn't know exactly how that was going to go over either at that time. And actually, I hid the first two or three charts in the administrator's office. Even the nurses in the hospital didn't exactly know what was going on. The local father was a little squeamish. They investigated a whole proposition and it got all the way to the Vatican. All of a sudden we got a special dispensation from the Vatican that it was okay to do this in a Catholic hospital providing we do no harm. We didn't do sterilizations. We didn't do tubal ligations. We didn't do abortions. But we were doing transsexual surgery. So it was rather a phenomenon at that time. Of all the cases that have been done, by far, the greatest majority is male-to-female. The female-to-male surgery, as far as I'm concerned, is still somewhat experimental.

11:40 [music out]

11:42 MB: I'm just going to run to the hospital quickly and see my post-op patients from yesterday. I had two GRS surgeries.

11:49 MB: I don't know . . . I'm sort of having a bad hair day today. Oh well.

11:53 [cell phone rings]

11:55 MB: Hello.

11:56 MB: When I moved to Trinidad I thought, *Well, you know, I'm probably going to return to Seattle.*

12:00 MB: Two major surgeries, and I've got more surgery tomorrow and two more on Friday.

12:04 MB: You know, I bought a home in Trinidad. One the town needs me. They need the money that comes in for it. And secondly, I think the community needs me.

12:12 MB: Look at the hospital and how busy it is. It's thriving, isn't it?

12:17 MB: It's actually been a little bit difficult for me, having come here and suddenly been very visible as an out trans person. You have to realize after my transition six years ago, I really went underground.

12:29 John: Another day, huh?

12:30 MB: Another day. Don't I have four?

12:32 MB: You know I really did very well in just blending into the rest of the female physician population.

12:39 MB: I think these two are leaving tomorrow.

12:45 MB: Is everything good still? Good, good, good?

12:47 Jean: yeah.

12:48 Jean: I came here with my significant other. I wouldn't be here if he hadn't come with me.

12:54 Jean: It's hard. It's scary, but it's something you have to do. So when you have something you have to do, you just do it. But it's a lot easier when you have family with you.

13:11 Chuck: You know, I love Jean dearly. And I couldn't see not being here with here. It's a life-changing event. I feel it's kind of like an honor to be here.

13:26 MB: Patients that come to me for surgery, they feel a kinship and a sisterhood with me that makes them I think feel increasingly comfortable.

13:36 MB: Hello, Teri.

13:38 Teri: And I feel great.

13:39 MB: She looks wonderful.

13:40 Teri: I feel great.

13:41 MB: As it should be. Good.

13:42 Teri: Yeah, and it's nice looking down there and seeing that smooth area [laughs].

13:47 MB: Rest up tomorrow. Maybe even a shower.

13:51 Teri: That would be great.

13:52 MB: Okay.

13:53 Teri: Okay. Thank you.

13:54 Teri: I think Marci . . . she's more than just a surgeon. She brings the whole surgery situation to another level. It's the spiritual experience in addition to the surgery.

14:16 MB: Tami, hello. Hi you. How's your first night? How did you do?

14:20 Tami: Actually, I didn't do too bad. At first I had a little bit of pain.

14:24 MB: Your surgery went very well. You know that, right? Kind of saw me. Kind of there, fading in and out.

14:31 Teri: I was kind of . . . I remember going back to the room . . . and that was the last time . . .

14:35 MB: Yeah, that was about it. Well it went very, very well.

14:39 Teri: Actually, I really do appreciate what you've done for me.

14:42 MB: I know you do.

14:44 Teri: No, you don't really realize how much you have helped me by doing this.

14:51 MB: So stay warm. Stay bundled up, okay? And I'll be in tomorrow, okay?

15:02 Sabrina: I first heard of Trinidad when I came out for my SRS surgery with Dr. Bowers.

15:05 [music in]

15:11 SM: I didn't mind my childhood being a boy. I did things like build go-karts, and I was more of what we'd call a gear head. I was a mechanically inclined kid. But when I turned thirteen, I remember having a dream where I was a Rockette in a kickline, and it was a very vivid, very real dream where I was actually in it. I don't want to call it a past-life experience, but it sure felt like it. After that I started getting curious, and so I started doing things, wearing pantyhose, high heels, and making myself up as a girl through my teenage years. And I liked what I saw. I tried so hard to fit in with what I was given. You know, I would look in the mirrors as a child or a teenager and say, "Okay, I see a boy. This is what the world sees, is a boy, so therefore I need to be a boy." Because I was into model railroading, I went to the public library and I was looking through the card catalog for "train," I ran across the word "transsexual." And my heart stopped, and I froze, and I really thought that the librarian was just staring at me because she knew I was looking up the word "transsexual."

16:37 SM: I was horrified to think that I might be one of these people. But inevitably it's just overwhelming. It's not a choice. It's not something you choose. Like so many other things in life, it's what God gave you. I first came out publicly when I was twenty-five years old. I had to face the fact that I was transgender, or at the time a cross-dresser, and I didn't want to embarrass my family and embarrass my friends. So I left to go to Florida to find myself.

17:20 SM: As I was leaving, for some reason I just stopped at the first shopping mall. And I just built up all my strength and went in and bought my first brassier. I knew they would never see me there again. And they could laugh all they wanted, but they wouldn't see me again.

17:36 SM: And when I got to Delaware, I walked in and I bought a wig. And when I got to Baltimore, I went in to a shopping mall and I went in and bought a dress. And by the time I got to Florida, I had a full wardrobe, and from that point on, Sabrina was born and I just decided I would never go back again.

18:00 SM: And then I met my wife. It was love and first sight and I fell in love with her. And we went on three dates, and I thought, *I have to tell her now, because if I don't tell her now and she rejects me, I'll never ever be able to get over it.* So I told her, and she said she could accept it, and we got married and had children.

18:22 SM: After our first child was born, I was still cross-dressing, and she said, "You can't do this in the house anymore."

18:32 SM: And to be very honest, the road for the spouses is not easy at all. She really thought she could handle this, and she could really get through this and deal with this. But over the years, it was harder for her than she thought it was.

18:49 SM: Let me talk a little bit about the pains of being transgender.

18:51 [music out]

18:52 [music in]

18:52 SM: You lose it all, immediately, now, everything's gone. The police just show up at your house and say, "You have fifteen minutes to leave your premises." And you have fifteen minutes to pack some clothing. You can't take anything else but your clothing.

And you have to leave your house, and you can't come back. And they don't tell you where you can go or anything. You're just gone. You can't be within five hundred feet of that house ever again.

19:22 SM: I had to go to court, and the opposing attorney went up to the judge somewhere in the middle of the case with a picture of me in a dress. Now the judge has the right to judge you based on moral issues. If the judge feels you're morally unfit, the judge does not have to allow you to go back to your house. I still have parental rights, and I still have visitation rights, and I am able to visit my children, but it's only because of the goodness of my ex. She just wanted a divorce; she did not want to take the children away from me, and she felt that was the only means to get to the end result.

19:58 SM: At the time of my divorce and the time of my transition, I was working for the prime contractor at the Kennedy Space Center. My job was a shuttle engineer. When they found out that I was transitioning, six weeks later I was dismissed. I did petition the company. I petitioned the state. I petitioned the federal government and lost on all counts.

20:19 SM: Before my surgery I was trying to live it as a half man-half woman kind of scenario, trying to please everyone, essentially. And I couldn't. I couldn't please anyone.

20:29 SM: After I was fired and after I was divorced, my thought was essentially that everything I loved about being a man was removed from me. So from that point on, I was just going to live my life as a woman, and take my chances that way.

20:35 [music out]

20:47 [music in]

20:56 Hi. My name is Sally. I am eight years old right now.

21:00 I'm Austin and I'm five.

21:02 I'm Summer and I'm eight years old.

21:04 My name is Nicholas Sherwood and I am eleven years old.

21:08 Jeanette Garlo. I'm fourteen years old.

21:11 And I'm a freshman at Trinidad High School.

21:13 I'm Lucy. I'm twelve, and of course I live in Trinidad.

21:20 I think I'll be a great mom.

21:24 Basketball player.

21:26 I would like to work with animals or something.

21:27 I would really like to be a Colorado Division of Wildlife officer.

21:32 Join the military and become a nurse.

21:34 My original dream was to be a NASCAR pit crew, but I don't think that's going to happen.

21:42 Men don't wear dresses.

21:45 Maybe men are probably more stronger.

21:47 Well I think men have better taste in more like sports and politics.

21:53 Boys are lucky

21:54 Men don't really handle flowers a lot.

21:58 Really tough and brute and protect the family and bring home the bread and make the money and have to work.

22:05 Well I think it's true that truth is different for everybody I guess.

22:15 I have no idea.

22:17 I guess when a man tells her she's a woman.

22:22 I don't know. Well, women have boobs.

22:26 The woman is supposed to stay home, be the mother.

22:29 I think of dolls.

22:31 Flowers.

22:32 She's polite. She's not rude.

22:38 I think it's just all stereotypes, really.

22:41 A woman is always a woman in my opinion, no matter what they do. They could be like the skater jock or do anything and they'll always be a woman.

22:48 If they want to label me, myself as meek and soft, then they don't know me.

[laughs] I don't really care if they think that about me.

23:05 [music out]

23:06 LE: How does one know if one's a woman? How does one know anything?

23:07 [music in]

23:15 LE: You know your place in society. You know where you are, and somehow your body does not conform. I was the nurturer. I was the caregiver. Those tend to be more feminine roles. Married, two kids, then remarried. I don't think either one of my wives knew. They may have suspected a few things, but I don't think they knew.

23:54 LE: In medical school, we took a course called Human Growth and Development. The first month of that was on sexuality, and one of those days we had three transsexuals come in. There was a lot of ridicule about these folks. I spent a little bit of time talking to that second one. We were about the same age. I told her that what I thought she was doing was very courageous. I certainly didn't have the courage at that time.

24:31 LE: Somebody described it, and I think it's in the *Vagina Monologues*: There is a car with its burglar alarm going off, and it's going off constantly, and somebody finally turns it off.

24:53 LE: I haven't had it yet. I'm ready anytime. The problem is, Marci's booked up until the spring.

25:05 [music out]

25:09 SB: I met Dr. Laura Ellis, who is my business partner and friend, at the Southern Comfort Conference.

25:15 LE: It was like we had been long-lost friends.

25:18 SB: I was on the post side of my surgery and she was on the front side of it. And it just took off from there.

26:26 MB: I was actually considering opening a recovery house here, but it took the initiative of some outsiders, who themselves happen to be patients of mine, in deciding that they were going to leave everything they had behind and liquidate everything to put into this house.

26:38 [Birds, train whistle]

25:50 LE: So we came out last Halloween and found this house. The house is going to be called "Morning Glow." This will become the recovery center for Marci Bowers' patients following genital reassignment surgery.

26:08 LE: She is the best surgeon in the world doing that procedure, so we want to take the whole thing and take it up, way up to another level.

26:27 [music in]

26:23 SM: "Morning Glow" is a song from the Broadway musical *Pippin*, and Laura Ellis and I both saw *Pippin* as one of our very first Broadway shows, and the music from it is actually very apropos.

26:41 SM: It's a show about change. It's a show about finding one's self.

26:51 SM: Morning Glow is a loving place where people can become the person they want to be.

27:00 LE: This recovery center is going to be a trans-run facility for trans people. And this is going to be the only place like it in the world.

27:15 [music out]

27:13 [sanding]

27:15 SM: We're all transgender. Some of us are pre-op, some of us are not. We've all suffered the same pains of loss. Loss of family, loss of jobs, loss of finances.

27:29 JoAnne: I was on my last leg. I was traveling around the country looking for a place to live. I looked and looked and then I said, "Oh. My God! There's that little Trinidad. I remember hearing about Trinidad." Sabrina was just so generous and said, "Well, if you need a place to stay for a while, you can stay here for a while." And I was grateful.

27:55 JoAnne: When I go down the street, it seems like there's always somebody I know. That's a big change for me. Before I was used to just being anonymous. Now it seems like I'm somebody here in Trinidad.

28:09 [music in]

28:14 Well the patients of Dr. Biber, when they were ready to leave the hospital, they would ask me, "Can you take this guy down to the Best Western motel?" I'd say, "Sure, I'll take them down there." And I talked to them just like I do the rest of the tourists that's on here, you know?

28:30 You can't really say, "Oh, geez, look! There's a transsexual. Most of the time you can't tell.

28:41 Oh, you know, I think truthfully, they blend in. There are points when maybe they are first getting started when, you know, it's definitely that you can tell that there's a difference.

28:54 I've probably run into one, maybe, in the last year. I was checking into the hospital and there was this girl in front of me checking into the hospital, and I thought she was a hell of a good-looking girl.

29:09 I would say a good ten years ago. It blew my mind. I was working in the gas station and one of the so-called patients came in to buy gas, and you could spot it right away. It was obvious.

29:24 Occasionally they come in here and have dinner. I think maybe sometime people may just say they look more manly or something, but how can we say? I don't know.

[laughs] You know?

29:39 A lot of them come into the shop and get their hair done and their nails done. You know the majority of them stand out. You kind of know. And if they look a little different and they're trying to wear female clothing or whatever, you kind of already know.

29:56 We've seen one that has a real tacky wig. We've seen one that needs a fashion update. One of these days he/she's gonna walk by and I'm gonna yank 'em in, and give 'em some tips on fashion etiquette.

30:11 There are some that are bigger. But you do find some women, too, that are, you know, have a bigger bone structure also.

30:22 They feel pretty comfortable, cuz I've had a couple of incidences where you know, they want to really get into the detail. Some of them try to, you know, even show me, but I . . . [laughs]

30:35 Do I consider them women? Um, no. I don't consider them women until that's what they say they are.

30:42 You shouldn't fool with mother nature. That's my opinion though. I believe a man's a man and a woman's a woman. Whatever else, they should keep that secluded . . . from the world anyway.

30:54 I don't know what makes these people do what they do. I don't know what makes anybody do what they want to do. But you now, it doesn't matter what a person does, what choices they have, everyone has something screwed up in their head that makes them decisions for them.

31:09 People are prejudice.

31:10 Duke's mixture.

31:11 Right, and it's just something that people have to not be.

31:15 Get over it.

31:16 Right. Not be. Everybody's created equally. It doesn't matter.

31:21 Yeah, we all bleed the same color blood. We're all on the inside the same color person. Nobody can tell you any different, because they don't know you.

31:29 We're starting to sound like preachers.

31:32 Oh, I know it.

31:34 [laughter]

31:37 I think we have more transgenders in Trinidad than people actually realize. They have feelings. They have families. They have children. They have wants and desires just like every other person on God's green earth and they're just people, human beings.

32:04 [music]

32:08 MB These are just old photographs. I won't look through those too much.

32:14 MB: My home is in Seattle and my family is up there and that has been the one thing that draws me back. My spouse . . . we're more like sisters. We're best of friends. We talk every day. It's no longer about sexuality at all. But again, we always had a connection. We always had a friendship, and that still remains.

32:34 MB: Did you get those? They're unmistakable, aren't they? They're known as the Spanish Peaks. The Spanish Peaks or chichas, so . . .

32:46 [birds]

32:48 MB: I've certainly grown roots and fallen in love with the area. I met someone that I care about here as well. Carol, she's the director of golf over there.

32:59 MB: Carol hates it when we're late. Hates it!

33:03 MB: She's been a lesbian her whole adult life, and she was hired there ten years ago as a gay woman.

33:12 Carol: Uhhhn!

33:13 MB: Well, that was fine, but being with Marci, that's just too much. That's too much for some people. Especially the golf board, which is all men.

33:24 MB: She went past me on the fly.

33:27 Carol: Uhhhn!

33:29 MB: Carol's going into the trees today. She's having a tough go of it on this first hole.

33:38 MB: The Trinidad Golf Association had never had a transgender person compete for the ladies club championship.

33:45 MB: The year before when I wanted to play in it, they said, “Oh no, you can’t, because you didn’t join before May 20.” Well they never sent me an invitation as a new female member. So that was their first little dig at me. The next year I paid my dues . . . paid them early. But in the meantime, when it came later that summer, to August, they told me that in the interim, before I had joined, they had made a rule change where I couldn’t compete for the championship.

34:13 MB: I mean, I play golf well, but I don’t have any more strength than any other genetic female, so . . .

34:21 MB: Go that way! Get over the trap! Get over the trap!

34:25 MB: Okay, so, I think I’m on the green.

34:36 SM: I’m part of the Catholic Church. I participate in Sunday masses. I went to Catholic school, and it was run by the Irish Christian Brothers, and they gave me the gift of my faith. It was an education where I was taught not to judge. It was an education where I was taught to love exclusively. It was an education where I was taught to believe in who I am and myself and to not be afraid to make changes in the world for the positive. I don’t agree with everything that is going on with the Catholic faith. But the Catholic faith like any other faith or organization is an organization of people, and people will fail. I choose to change from within. My attitude is, Who are you to kick me out of my father’s house? And if you think that I’m such a darn sinner, then this is exactly where I need to be.

35:27 [church bells chime]

35:31 SB: This is the second church I’ve been to as a woman. They know I’m a transgender woman.

35:35 [organ music]

35:36 SB: My faith is very strong. I really feel I was given this life because there’s a mission for me. And many other transgender people feel the same way. I think God wants us in this place to be out there and brave enough to be ourselves and to let other people know that they can be themselves too. Because when they see me being myself, they can say, “Hey, if she has the guts to be who she is, then I can have the guts to be who I am.

36:16 LE: In Florida, I didn’t transition while I had a practice. My feeling was that that would have been fairly traumatic for everybody. Nobody has ever seen me as a male in Colorado.

36:31 LE: So how are you doing?

36:32 Patient: I’m doing fine. I’m working on my smoking. I haven’t quit.

36:38 LE: Quitting smoking.

36:39 Patient: I know, but I’m trying.

36:42 LE: You are, and you need to be congratulated for that.

36:46 Patient: If my employees perturb me, it’s either hit them or smoke a cigarette.

[laughs]

36:50 LE: What else can you do to help with that?

36:54 Patient: Not a whole lot. It’s just I get so mad at them. I’m not a violent person. Cigarettes calm me down.

37:00 LE: What if you up to Wal-Mart, and you bought one of these inflatable punching things.

37:08 Patient: Ahh, I don't know about that.

37:09 LE: All I'm doing is—

37:12 Patient: Trying to give me alternatives, I know.

37:13 LE: Exactly. Exactly.

37:17 LE: Prior to my coming here, the quality of medicine and practice in this town has been, quite frankly, rather abysmal. For example, using antibiotics for routine colds and things like that.

37:34 LE: You're not getting good blood supply, which means you probably have a blockage somewhere up in your groin, maybe your knee, but somewhere along up in there.

37:44 LE: I've been trying to change things.

37:47 LE: We really need to get that cholesterol level way down.

37:52 [crickets]

37:55 Erin: My name's Erin Ellis. I'm twenty-two. I moved here from Florida to be with my dad.

38:03 Erin: Cheers!

38:04 Erin: It was less than a year ago that my dad came out to me.

38:07 Erin: Dad told me, "We need to talk! We need to talk!" I was like, "Noooo!" I hate talking. I'm like, "What do we have to talk about?"

38:15 Erin: We went outside to the back porch. She asked me to read this letter on her laptop. So I sat there and I read it. And I'm like, are you kidding me? I'm like, okay. So I turned to her and I said, "Are you serious?" She said, "Yes." "Really?" "Yes." "Do you have anything else you want to tell me?" "No." "Okay."

38:39 Erin: "Can I go? [laughs] "Am I done?"

38:44 Erin: I guess that was my first anything with transsexualism. I mean I guess I knew somewhere in the back of my head and had heard about sex change operations, but it was never in the forefront. I've never known anybody that was transsexual. I thought my family was the poster child of—the poster family of normality. Except for me. [laughs] But I was just like, what?

39:08 Laura: I have a Funé and a Conundrum.

39:13 Erin: I thought my dad was the manliest guy pretty much ever.

39:15 LE: Hi, Chicky. We may have as many as eleven for dinner tonight.

39:19 Erin: I guess that's just not the case now, is it?

39:23 Erin: I shed some tears.

39:26 Erin: I kind of felt like as though I lost my dad without losing her. I've never lost any human being in my life. I've never been to a funeral of anybody I've ever been related to. And, that really scares me. But on the other hand, our relationship, I think we've bonded on a different level. Like, her wife is not out here. My brother is not out here. I'm the only family she's got out here so we've definitely bonded on that level.

39:52 Erin: We're not normal, so we figure nothing else should be normal either. So, this is my can opener that I can't figure out how to use, but I'll try.

39:58 LE: Can you believe it that our biggest challenge is opening up cans?

40:02 Erin: There's been a drastic change in my dad, not just physically—she seems to be a little more comfortable in her own skin.

40:13 Erin: Everybody in the house pretty much asks my opinion because I'm the female. What color should we paint this? Does this match? Do these shoes go? Does my makeup

look okay? Is my hair all right? You know, everything, and it's just like, no, go back downstairs [laughs] and let's try this again. Taste doesn't come with gender, I guess. And just because they're female now doesn't mean they can match any better.

40:38 Erin: I guess it is pretty cool to touch up your makeup at your dad's makeup desk.

40:43 Erin: When a transsexual really transitions from pretty much just playing with makeup every once in a while and then, you know, dressing up once in a while or whatever, to full-time living and stuff like that, it's like they're thirteen all over again.

40:58 SM: This is Jo Beth and Bobbie Sue. And the reason they're named that is because they're little boy dolls. And they're anatomically correct—for pre-op.

41:09 Erin: They never had the whole female adolescence, so they didn't put on bad makeup and it was okay and stuff. So now they're fifty years old and not knowing how to put makeup on and not matching and not wearing bras when they should and things like that . . . that's the learning curve that we're trying to impress.

41:28 Erin: Bye, Daddy. I love you.

41:29 Laura: I love you more. Bye.

41:33 Erin: I refer to my dad as my dad because my dad is my dad. It's not my mom; it's my dad. I have a mom and she's wonderful, and she's very supportive. And she's pretty funny, but that's my mom. I don't call my step-mom "mom." I don't call my step-dad, "dad," you know? I call my dad "dad" and my mom "mom."

41:54 [barking dog]

41:57 [bowling pins falling]

41:59 Erin: Sabrina and I are on a bowling league. Our team is called "Morning Glow."

42:07 Erin: I don't think poor Trinidad's ready for us. I really don't.

42:13 [bowling pins falling]

42:16 [bowling pins falling]

42:18 Hey, baby! That's my dog! That's my dog!

42:23 Erin: I think that there's going to be a big change in Trinidad with them coping with us being here.

42:30 SM: I always wonder, do the original locals think we're coming to take over the town?

42:35 [clapping]

42:38 SE: This is Jake. Mighty Jake Meyer.

42:43 [pins falling]

42:45 SE: You're the man! Five strikes in a row! That's quite manly of you, Jake.

42:51 [music in]

43:28 Erin: I mean, I'm open to anything. I don't care what you are or who you are or where you're from or whatever. If you're cool, you're cool. If you're not, you're not.

43:03 [pins falling]

43:04 SE: Spared it!

43:31 [music out]

43:34 From NPR news this is All Things Considered. I'm Melissa Block and I'm Michele Norris with an obituary for a man who changed a lot of lives. Stanley Biber was a doctor and a surgeon and he performed more sex-change surgeries than anyone else. Biber died earlier this week at age 82 in the town of Trinidad, Colorado, a place he single-handedly turned into the sex-change capital of the world. NPR's Jeff Brady reports.

44:02 Jeff Brady: Biber wasn't from the West, but he became a classic Western character. He owned a cattle ranch, and even though he stood about five feet, two inches tall, the doctor could be seen around town in his cowboy hat and boots walking with a confident swagger. Marci Bowers says Biber was active up until a few months ago when he took cattle from his ranch to market.

44:28 MB: And he insisted on leading the cattle drive to Nebraska. I believe that's where he contracted the pneumonia.

44:34 Jeff Brady: Dr. Biber died Monday evening at a hospital in Pueblo, Colorado. He is survived by his wife and ten children.

44:45 [sawing, hammering]

44:49 MB: I'm having some arches put in. I really didn't like this look. Of course, Dr. Biber passing recently was very painful. He was very much a father figure for me, and just a very stabilizing voice in the community. Dr. Biber also had a hand in maintaining support for me in the practice that I do. I don't think there will be any changes in course to change public sentiment. I do think that a lot more transgender people have come into town, and I say that with some apprehension, because . . . that's difficult. I mean, people were so warm to me and welcoming. The new transgender people in town, primarily the people that run the recovery house, they're of a different mindset. Their kids call them "Dad," both Sabrina and Laura. That's something that always has bothered me about their own personas. I think that really does a disservice to their own ability to integrate into town.

46:02 MB: Poquito mas. It's getting better.

46:07 Worker: okay?

46:08 MB: I think that's good.

46:09 MB: I have no idea when Morning Glow will be open. They're doing things from top to bottom, which I think is really wonderful, but I don't think it's . . . you know, it's just . . . you can't get anywhere if you start working sometimes later in the morning. You can't get anywhere if you take off the month of December.

46:40 SM: This is the front bedroom of the house. I think the last time you saw it all the walls were down and ripped off. As you can see now, we're pretty close to getting it finished. We're putting beds and furniture in. The master bedroom is lagging behind a little bit, but the floors are done and the walls are done, so it's in pretty good shape all in all.

47:05 [phone rings]

47:08 SM: Hi, Marci.

47:09 MB: Carol and I are about thirty minutes away.

47:14 SM: We haven't sat down yet, so . . .

47:16 MB: Thirty minutes, maybe.

47:18 SM: Okay, well do the best you can.

47:21 MB: Thank you.

47:22 SM: Bye.

47:25 LE: Sabrina, when is Marci going to get here?

47:26 SM: Half hour.

47:30 LE: Well the food's going to be ready before she gets here.

47:31 SM: I understood that.

47:33 LE: All right.

47:34 SM: And she knows that too.

47:35 All: Bless us O' Lord for these thy gifts that we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, amen.

47:40 JoAnne [singing] Amen.

47:43 SM: The eulogy this Sunday was really good. It was about honoring doctors. That God gives them the gift to carry out God's work.

47:51 MB: Hello!

47:52 LE: Hey Marci.

47:56 MB: What's with the fall tablecloth.

47:59 SE: I'm not in charge of tablecloths.

48:00 MB: This is clearly for the fall. Is this what people can expect?

48:03 SE: No.

48:04 [laughter]

48:05 SM: This is what we put out—

48:06 MB: It's February, do you know that?

48:08 SM: We only put this out for you.

48:10 MB: People are very excited. I'm sure you're getting e-mails every day.

48:13 SM: The gal I was talking to she asked me today, "Well, how's the house coming?" I said, "It's getting there." She goes, "When will you open?" I said, "I don't know."

48:21 MB: Can I strip wallpaper or something?

48:24 SM: Well, these rooms are not going to be done before we open.

48:26 MB: Ahhh! What!?

48:28 SM: Before we open, we're not doing these rooms.

48:29 MB: Oh, come on.

48:30 MB: Maybe I could come and do that. If I could do one room . . . do you think I could come and do this room?

48:39 LE: The time that we have is being spent getting the rooms ready upstairs.

48:43 MB: I understand.

48:44 LE: And the money. And there's no money. It's all coming out of our pocket.

48:51 SM: You know, the reason I tiled the bathrooms is because we couldn't pay someone to do the bathrooms. I had to do all the tile in this house because we couldn't afford to get someone.

48:58 MB: Is that right?

48:59 SM: Yeah.

49:00 MB: I'm just looking out for you. It's like this pot of gold sitting there waiting for you.

49:06 LE: I mean, if we had gobs of money, this would be done by now. We've just . . . I've just acquired enough money that we can pay the plumbers to come in and finish.

49:16 MB: This has to be your thing. You have to be here for the right reasons, and survive on your own. You don't know how much I want to just dive in. I can't. This is your thing, and you know that.

49:29 MB: Well, so anyway.

49:30 Carol: Thank you for having me. Thank you for having us.

49:33 MB: The wine was lovely. The dinner was lovely. Thank you. The company was wonderful.

49:38 LE: I'm glad you liked it.

49:39 SM: This was fun. This was a fun night. Very fun.

49:42 MB: Nice to see you both. Thank you so much.

49:44 SM: Okay, see you later. I'm going to bed now.

49:46 LE: Yeah, we're going too.

49:47 SM: Yeah, you coming too? Yeah. Goodnight.

49:52 JoAnne: You think Marci took the hint?

49:54 LE: What hint are you talking about?

49:57 JoAnne: Oh, you know. The need. The need for funds.

50:04 Laura: I doubt it.

50:17 [guitar, singing]

50:28 LE: If I didn't come to Trinidad, I would be slowly transitioning. Coming to Trinidad has sped up that process. For me, personally, the genital surgery means an inner peace. It is something that you look forward to, and desperately look forward to. Transition isn't something that we individually go through. Everybody around us goes through it. When you announce that you're trans, I swear, people would be more comfortable if you announced that you had pancreatic cancer.

51:19 Girl: How are you?

51:20 LE: Good, how are you?

51:22 Girl: Good. What can I get for you?

51:23 LE: A basket of tomatoes. It's easier for people to accept the terminal diagnosis than being trans. It's something that is not within most people's life experiences.

51:35 [guitar, singing]

51:45 LE: Jean Paul Sartre wrote a play called *No Exit*. And one of the last lines of the play is "Hell is other people."

51:52 LE: What variety of corn?

51:53 Guy: This is peaches and cream.

51:54 LE: Oh, good. That's a nice one. And I agree with that. We make other people's lives hell. We do that as we transition, particularly for our families. And it's a source of great sorrow to us. But on the other hand, if we don't do it, then we may not survive. We have to do something for ourselves.

52:25 [birds]

52:27 SM: Okay, that's my jeep over there. That's Margarita. The kids and I have traveled in it all over the country.

52:34 SM: I've been an out transgender person for over twenty years, and I wanted to maintain my family life, my children.

52:43 SM: Hi. How are you doing?

52:45 Woman: How have you been? How's your house going?

52:47 SM: It's taking a little longer than we thought.

52:48 Woman: Oh, it always does in Trinidad.

52:49 SM: Doesn't it?

52:50 [laughter]

52:51 SM: Yeah, we kind of learned that the hard way.

52:54 SM: I like the lager, that's what I like.

52:56 SM: Once I started my transition, I knew that I'd have to sacrifice much of that, which ended up being the case. My relationship with my children was very strained after

that happened. They were being told by some family members and some friends of my wife that they didn't need to be associated with me anymore. Or that I wasn't a good parent, or, something along those lines.

53:32 Alex: I'm Alex, and this is my brother.

53:33 Matt: I'm Matt, and this is my sister.

53:35 [laughs]

53:38 Alex: I'm seventeen.

53:40 Matt: I'm fifteen.

53:42 We're here in Trinidad visiting my dad, Sabrina.

53:49 Alex: Ah! Matthew!

53:52 Matt: I was drinking that.

53:55 Alex: When she said, I'm moving out to Colorado, of course we were sad, because we wouldn't be seeing our dad as much, but it was kind of that little bit of, okay now we won't have to worry because people there don't care, and we can just tell them, this is my dad.

54:12 SM: Telling my children about being transgender was a very tricky thing.

54:16 [music in]

54:16 SM: My children at the time were nine and seven.

54:19 SM: We talked about children in school who were different. And I asked my children, I said, "Do you know anyone who's a little bit more effeminate or who's not as sporty? Do you know any boys who are more quite and girl-like, or do you know any girls who are more boy-like?" And they said, "Oh yeah, sure. We know plenty of kids like that." After that, I told them that I was one of those kids growing up. And that I was a little bit different, and I felt different, and I had to kind of change in order to, you know, fit in to society.

54:49 Alex: When we were little, we used to always eat Oreos and watch *X-files* together. That was like our thing, right? And my mom kind of told us about it, and then she said, "Sabrina's going to introduce herself." And she came out as Sabrina and we ate Oreos and watched *X-files*, and that kind of instilled in me that, hey, there's nothing different, it's still dad.

55:10 SM: As time went on and I won back some visitation rights, I also won back the right to have them over the summer.

55:22 SM: Last year I took them on a trip across country, and we had a wonderful, wonderful trip.

55:36 SM: By the end of the trip they were calling me "Brie," which is their name for me. They call me "Dad," and they call me "Brie," short for "Sabrina" in public because that's what they're comfortable with. They call me "she."

55:46 Alex: It's good to see her as she wants to be, and, again, she's not a different person. It's still our dad.

56:02 SM: Did you guys take all the glazes?

56:04 SM: Do you have pewter?

56:07 Matt: We have black.

56:09 Lara: No, pewter's over here.

56:10 SM: Where?

56:10 Alex: We definitely joke around more.

56:12 Alex: Is this your pubic hair pot?

56:14 SM: It's not pubic hair. Leave me alone.
56:15 Alex: It looks like pubic hair.
56:17 SM: Don't be gross.
56:20 SM: They love me as their father. We joke and tease.
56:23 SM: She had one boy write a love letter.
56:25 Lara: Oh wow, how cool.
56:26 SM: He's going to miss what, your smile, and your . . . ?
56:29 Alex: He doesn't say that.
56:32 Matt: And then sometimes she like, "I'm serious now. Stop laughing."
56:35 SM: The red what?
56:36 Matt: The red.
56:37 Lara: The Christmas red.
56:37 SM: Oh, it's over here. I don't want you to use the Christmas red.
56:39 Matt: Why?
56:40 SM: Because I don't have a lot of it. I like it.
56:42 Lara: There's more at the store.
56:44 SM: All right, use the Christmas red.
56:46 SM: Alex will be going to college the following year, so this is her senior year. And then next summer, she may or may not want to come out. She'll be eighteen and she may want to spend some more time with her friends. So I really want to make this a quality summer.
57:00 Lara: That turned out pretty good. It turned out pretty girly for me. I'm kind of in a girly phase.
57:05 Matt: I like the people here. They're really friendly.
57:08 Lara: If you want, we can wax over it so you don't have to worry about it.
57:12 Matt: They haven't really been mean or anything about this.
57:16 Alex: It's definitely changed me, and I think Matt too. I think that we both are more accepting of people.
57:31 [garage door]
57:35 MB: I like my little garden paradise, don't you?
57:47 MB: My malpractice insurance was canceled after there was a change in ownership with my malpractice carrier to a faith-based company, so they didn't like the work that I was doing, and they decided to cancel my insurance even though there has not been a malpractice suit here in Trinidad in 35 years.
57:56 MB: How's everyone?
57:58 Patient: Well, I'm told I can cough and it's okay and things aren't going to fall off.
58:02 MB: And how about up here, because we did your top too? I think they came out really nice.
58:08 Patient: They feel nice, you know?
58:12 MB: Too much information.
58:13 MB: I did find a new malpractice carrier, so it allowed me to continue on, but in the meantime I had to really scratch my head to decide if I was going to stay here or if I was going to pack up and go back to Seattle.
58:24 MB: Well John, are we having the Fourth of July again?
58:29 John: Fourth of July? It's the only clean one I had.
58:31 [laughter]

58:34 MB: But I stay here because I realize the role I play here is much larger than it would be if I was in a larger city. You know, I really make a difference for the lives of people here.

58:45 MB: Hi, this is Dr. Marci Bowers calling. How are you? Well I'm just confirming, you do have your date, so don't fear that, okay?

58:55 MB: You know, we're getting close to a year out in our surgery bookings. You can only do so many surgeries in a week. I'm only, you know, one person.

59:02 MB: Phenotypic female. Male-to-female transgender individual who has had long-standing gender dysphoria. She has two letters of recommendation for surgery, period. Furthermore she has a good understanding of the procedure as well as its limitations as well as risks, options, and alternatives, period. Potential risks include infection, bleeding, nonhealing, possibility of blood transfusion, fistula formation of either the bladder or rectum. Despite that, she wishes to precede, period. Consent was obtained, period. Thanks so much for your transcription. Over. Bye.

59:36 MB: I needed to come in and make some innovations. I wanted to make sure that what was offered was something that if I were seeking surgery I would want that kind of care. I would say that I do about an 80 percent different operation than Dr. Biber did originally. The biggest improvements I've made personally, were changes in appearance.

1:00:02 [music in]

1:00:13 MB: When I look at GRS results from the past, I'm stunned sometimes.

1:00:24 MB: I've taken it, I think, to a new level of anatomic reproducibility. For me, this surgery's absolutely about art. I can take a protractor and measure angles and make it a science, but the truth is is when you get in there you're faced with so many different variables that you're better off treating it as a piece of artwork.

1:01:00 MB: That trained eye that I had over many, many doing years of GYN, I have a sense of the visual relationships, the special relationships that the structures have.

1:01:18 MB: That's much more important than my trans history. That's just an interesting artifact. But the fact is that first I'm an artist, secondly I'm a surgeon, and third I'm a gynecologist, and about eighth I'm a trans person.

1:01:30 [music out]

1:01:36 [water running]

1:01:46 SM: Best bathtub in the West.

1:01:49 SM: There are days I'm very happy, like I'm elated to be Sabrina, and there are days when I really miss Marc. You know, I really miss some of the other things, male things. So, I don't think that's much different from anybody else. I'm just honest enough to say it. It's horrible in the trans community to ever admit that you miss your boy self. But there's times when I miss it a little bit. And it's not the sex part. It really isn't the sex part. The part I miss, is being able to dance with my wife. I really, really liked doing that. And being able to sing in karaoke with a voice that matched my body. That was kind of fun. You know, now when I get up and sing Frank Sinatra, it looks a little odd when you're doing it in a skirt. [laughs] You have boobs.

1:02:43 [music in]

1:02:46 SM: If you feel that you need to alter your body or you just desire to alter your body in order to more match who you are, then you should be able to do that.

Transgender people aren't the only ones who alter their bodies. Men and women are changing their bodies all the time. Other than GRS, all the surgeries we go through were

not invented for transgender people. Liposuction wasn't invented for us. Breast implants weren't invented for us. We just take advantage of them for a slightly different reason because we feel we need to fit into our new bodies. If the opportunity was there for me, if there wasn't so much societal pressure, I might still have my old genitalia. It's so difficult to live in that bi-gender role, physically appearing as a female and yet having male genitalia. You're almost pushed into this environment where you're either a boy or a girl. There really needs to be an allowance for people who are somewhere in the middle. I consider myself a transsexual woman.

1:04:18 SM: My transition took almost fourteen years, and I'm really glad it did. You know, I watch the people who do this in two or three years, and they're missing the boat in a lot of ways. It's just too fast. You have to make your mind right before you make your body right. You have to accept who you are, and be comfortable with who you are. Having the final surgery is just plastic surgery, and it's really not that fulfilling.

1:04:20 [music out]

1:05:11 LE: My parts have changed. I had my surgery on October 4,

1:05:16 LE: Which is National CBers' Day. Right? 10-4.

1:05:17 [music in]

1:06:34 Erin: I think a lot of the girls feel like they're born here. It's when they finally are born into the body that they feel like they should have been born into.

1:07:06 [music out]

1:07:06 [applause]

1:07:09 Announcer: I want to call your attention in front of the grandstand of the Trinidad Riding Club flag.

1:07:22 Announcer: The grand entry in rodeo has been part of the color and the pageantry of rodeo every since the first rodeo up in Deer Trail so many years ago.

1:07:36 [singing]: From the land of the free, and the home of the brave

1:07:44 [applause]

1:07:55 [music in]

1:08:08 Man in chair: Well, nothing against Dr. Biber, but all you have to do is read any of the newspapers from the last few years and you'll find out all kinds of things about Dr. Biber.

1:08:19 Glen: The operations here has brought a lot of money into the hospital and has kept it from closing down. So it's been good for us.

1:08:27 Woman in white: So if it wasn't for the sex changes, we wouldn't have our hospital, which is pretty amazing to know.

1:08:36 Woman in pink: The hospital only gets like the basic like \$2,000 or something like that, but the operation costs like \$20,000 something like that. It doesn't bring very much to the hospital at all.

1:08:43 Guy (OS): The doctors are pocketing all the money.

1:08:46 Woman in pink: I don't believe it's right. God doesn't make mistakes.

1:08:52 Woman in grey: That's a lot of what you get in Trinidad is some people think the doctor's playing God, by changing what was meant to be and changing to something else, so . . . I guess everyone has different opinions.

1:09:10 Man with moustache: I keep constantly hearing the thing that this shouldn't be approved here because this is a strong Catholic town.

1:09:18 Glen: There is some very deeply religious people, which I am. I'm not for the sex-change operations myself, personally. I don't believe . . . I don't necessarily believe in it.

1:09:34 Jeannie and husband: There are the people who are very against it. Thinks it's absolute evil, absolute sin, ought to be run out of town, and then there are the people who think that it's a really good thing for Trinidad, and it puts this city on the map in a small way. It brings money into the hospital. So it's those two sides I think. And everybody else, which is more than the majority, is just floating along in the middle. It doesn't really affect you in your day-to-day life.

1:10:04 [music out]

1:10:07 JoAnne: This week marks the first anniversary of our work. We began work about a year ago this week. You know, back then, we hoped that we would have most of this done in six months, well, it's turned out to be about a twelve-month job, and we're still not done.

1:10:59 SM: We're starting to have guests come in and be here at Morning Glow, and we're really, really thrilled about that. Everyone's healthy, wealthy, and wise. No one's wealthy, actually, but everyone's healthy and pretty wise.

1:10:36 LE: The last couple of months we've just been struggling to get the house open and we've not been getting the support that was promised. The patients were supposed to just as a matter of routine be discharged to us around day four, and we haven't seen that at all.

1:10:55 MB: The original plan was that patients would go to Morning Glow after four days. Well, you know, we didn't expect it would take another eight months for the house to open. And then when it finally did, things aren't done. There's no license, there's no insurance.

1:11:12 [train horn, dog barking]

1:11:15 Hannah: It's so good to see you.

1:11:17 MB: Hello.

1:11:18 Hannah: Hello, sweetie.

1:11:20 LE: Hi.

1:11:21 MB: Hi, Laura. How are you?

1:11:22 LE: I'm good. How are you?

1:11:24 MB: Very good, thank you.

1:11:26 LE: Marci says that the patients aren't ready for it, or that she doesn't feel that the house is ready. And yet we have some people coming, so, you know, if it's ready for one why isn't it ready for all?

1:11:43 Hannah: We just walked in the door actually.

1:11:45 MB: Oh, so right when we did.

1:11:49 MB: Did you see in here?

1:11:50 Hannah: Wow! Cool.

1:11:52 Hannah: I like the—

1:11:54 MB: Oh, it's got character, but I wouldn't say they're done yet.

1:11:59 MB: I have no motivation or interest in putting my patients at jeopardy.

1:12:04 MB: It's going to be wonderful, but it's not done yet.

1:12:07 MB: You've got five-day-old stitches and you're walking around, and you trip on the threshold and you pop your stitches out. I mean that's just—no . . . no.

1:12:17 MB: It looks really . . . it looks good. Now this area . . . needs some imagination still, but it's coming.

1:12:25 LE: Marci has never been particularly friendly to me since I've come here. I don't know why.

1:12:33 MB: That's good, very good.

1:12:36 MB: Well somebody said that they thought she was jealous of me or something. I fit in here and I adapted to the town and have succeeded in some respects, and, and she's never really been accepted that way.

1:12:55 LE: When I ask Marci, she says, "Oh no, everything's good, everything's good," but it's not.

1:13:01 SM: Bless us, oh Lord, for these thy gifts that we are about to receive through thy bounty through Christ our Lord, amen.

1:13:06 Carol: Amen.

1:13:12 MB: I never get tired of hearing good news.

1:13:14 SM: Could you pass the Parmesan? Molly, are you having any?

1:13:16 MB: Did you get all the gnocchi cut?

1:13:20 SB: You'd be surprised at how little there is. That's a triple batch. I made one batch for six people a few weeks ago . . .

1:13:21 LE: I have been dissatisfied with Trinidad on a number of levels: personally, professionally. There have been promises given that have not been kept, and it's just been a number of personal disappointments. I will leave when I find the right job. Sabrina will stay. Yeah, she likes it here. She's got a good job at the hospital with the IT department.

1:14:20 SM: I've been working here full-time for about six or seven months.

1:14:14 SM: Hey, Miriam. I'm here to fix your printer. Did you change the cartridge?

1:14:18 Miriam: Uhn-uh.

1:14:20 Sabrina: We were just going to work at Morning Glow, but it didn't work out.

1:14:26 [music in]

1:14:28 Radio 1: You going to cut off your willy, you're going to walk around in women's clothes, you're going to wind up dead under a freeway, Johnson. It's not going to be an HBO special about your travails, and how surgery made you a happy woman. No more in Denmark. The capital of it is somewhere in Colorado, of course, near Columbine. You wonder why kids shoot each other there with black raincoats.

1:14:49 NPR: Steve Stanton was the city manager of Largo, Florida, until last night. The city commission voted to fire him after news leaked that he was planning to undergo a sex change from man to woman.

1:14:59 Radio 2: I think some people are inviting dissent. I think some of the militants in the gay community are actually asking for this fight.

1:15:06 Radio 3: This PC madness, is absolutely out of control all across the country, killing us in the war on terror as well, because we become a nation of sissies.

1:15:15 SM: I was interviewed by the local newspaper, and they published two articles. One was my interview, and one was a statement by a nondenominational minister, who claimed to be starting a coalition of people against the surgeries being done in Trinidad.

1:15:34 MB: He called it a "Coalition of the Willing," looking for volunteers in a sense to rise up and put an end to this awful practice. The letter was very laced with intolerance and some really, frankly, offensive references to what we were all about.

1:15:57 MB: This guy's someone who had never visited any of the patients. He'd never talked to any of the nurses. He'd never talked to any of the shopkeepers or bed-and-breakfast owners who had interacted with people. Well, now that Dr. Biber's gone, maybe it will just end. Maybe Dr. Bowers should leave. Let's just be a normal community. Let's get rid of the sex change thing maybe. You know, I think that entered into people's mindset. I guess that sort of took the cloak of mystery off of the whole practice, and let the town have its say on something that had been done here for 35 years.

1:16:42 SM: Over the following six or eight weeks, the newspapers were flooded with comments.

1:16:52 MB: You know, I had always had anecdotal, you know, people saying, "Hey, we appreciate what you are doing. Thank you, we know you're helping people." That kind of thing, but this really put it out in the papers for everyone to see. This is a town of tolerance and of acceptance, and that was reaffirmed over, and over, and over again in these letters to the editor.

1:17:10 SM: It really set the tone and let us know that, yeah, we're okay here. There was just no doubt that this was an okay place for us to be.

1:17:14 [music out]

1:17:19 [church bells ringing]

1:17:20 SM: Even the head of the Catholic Church wrote in support for us.

1:17:31 FH: My name is Father Bob Hagan, and I'm the pastor of Holy Trinity Parish and its missions here in Trinidad. I'm not a liberal priest Catholic priest. I'm known as a rather conservative, traditional Catholic priest. I believe the gender reassignment process is an area where it is very difficult to come up with a one-size-fits-all morality. We need to realize that people are unique in their sexuality. They're highly individual. They find themselves on a spectrum. And they may not necessarily fit neatly into preconceived categories. It may be best to leave the labeling alone, and to be comfortable with diversity. It's very important that we not fail in love, and if we do, then we've lost everything as Christian people.

1:18:46 LE: My time period here has been a learning experience. There have been good things and there have been some not-so-good things. There have been a tremendous number of losses. I regret leaving my spouse. She has been absolutely heroic through all of this. I regret the loss of communication with my family. I was never terribly close to them because I wasn't who they thought I was to begin with. And so when I came out to them, they didn't have any clue. They thought that I had lost my mind. They still do.

1:19:39 SM: You're taking your knives with you, right? Being able to go and exist as a new persona isn't an easy thing to do. Laura literally transitioned in Trinidad, and so that's a kind of tough stage and a tough thing to do.

1:19:57 LE: When the opportunity came, I sort of jumped at it. And that really, I think affected me. I wanted to do this so much, maybe I jumped way too fast. Not maybe, I did.

1:20:22 LE: We are each other's hells, but we're also each other's salvations. If we're not true to ourselves, then we can't do right for anybody. And so one of my real regrets is that I have been, in being true to myself, I have been hell to other people.

1:20:43 [music in]

1:20:46 LE: Dreams change. So what happens after I leave is it becomes somebody else's dream. Whoever comes in next will reap those benefits, and so I'll have a legacy here to some extent, and that's good.

1:21:16 LE: Make the house work.

1:21:17 Erin: I'm trying.

1:21:19 LE: They need a lot of help.

1:21:20 Erin: I know Dad, that's why I'm here.

1:21:35 LE: This time in Trinidad has allowed me to emerge as a woman, and that's the way they have known me here. I mean, this is who I am.

1:21:57 MB: I like it here. I have a home here now. I'm really not interested in leaving. This is kind of a magical place, and symbolically, it makes a lot of sense that people climb to 6,300 feet and change their sex. It's such a profound thing to do anyway, that it sort of fits with this community.

1:22:23 SM: Laura leaving is a sad thing. This isn't a transsexual thing or a transgender thing. It's just, you know, a growing thing. Maybe she just wants to go to a place where she's just, you know, Laura as she sees herself as Laura now, not the Laura who is learning how to be Laura.

1:22:49 SM: My drink was spilling on my hand.

1:22:51 Guy: This is Bernard Parsons.

1:22:52 SM: Hi. Pleasure to meet you.

1:23:53 Guy: The Parsons have such a long history in this town. They almost founded this town.

1:22:57 SM: Really?

1:22:58 Bernard: We welcome you to our community.

1:22:59 SM: Well, thank you.

1:23:00 Bernard: You bet.

1:23:01 SM: Thank you very much.

1:23:01 Bernard: This is a fun place, There's great opportunity here.

1:23:05 SM: I love this place. I'm going to tell you, we're all looking to make this an exciting, better place, to honor it. I love that this is the Wild West, because it still is.

1:23:17 Bernard: It is. Fantastic. I want to shake your hand, but I want to hug you too.

1:23:22 SM: You want to hug me? Give me a hug, sweetie.

1:24:58 [music out]

[1:22:28 credits until end of DVD]