

My name is Richard Anumene and I am a detransitioner. My parents and older brother were born in Nigeria but later emigrated to the United States. Throughout my life, we were isolated from anyone who disagreed with my father's beliefs. As I grew up, I started to feel that something was wrong with me, that I was different.

I started identifying as a transgender woman in 2014. I started socially transitioning after I attended an in-person transgender meetup group in Sacramento, California, where I was told about "The Gender Health Center." The GHC provided me with cross-sex hormones, legal name and gender marker change assistance, transgender support groups, and a day center for people ages 13 and up to just hang out together. Much older trans-identified males befriended me, and I finally felt less alone. They welcomed me into their social group and gave me the attention that I wasn't receiving from family and friends. Everything I was seeking personally and socially seemed to be fulfilled ten times over. It was an amazing feeling at the time.

During this time, I had my first romantic relationship with a woman. It was short lived, and I ended up homeless. After that, my father convinced me to return to presenting as a man. I had only lived as a woman for roughly a year before I desisted. A few years later, I left my father's unhealthy household, severed my relationship with him, fell between homelessness and transitional housing, and retransitioned under the guidance and encouragement of Kaiser Permanente healthcare professionals.

I had facial feminization surgery in November of 2020. I had vaginoplasty five months afterward in March 2021, while I was still healing from the 1st surgery. I was chronically depressed and suicidal throughout the pandemic, which worsened months after I had vaginoplasty.

By July 2021, I started to regret my transition and begin detransitioning, four months after I had vaginoplasty. I realized that I am not a transgender woman but that I am a heterosexual man. The realization of what had been done to me led to unprecedented mental breakdowns and substance abuse to try to alleviate my mental distress. I quit taking cross-sex hormones and dilating my artificial vagina cold turkey, and I don't know how that will affect me--no one does--because these interventions are experimental.

How did this happen to me, and how can you prevent it from happening to others?

During my formative years, I experienced significant adverse childhood experiences. I suffered frequent physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse at the hands of my parents and brother. My parents sought professional help for me from age 7, though we did not have stable housing or enough food to eat. I was diagnosed with a number of mental illnesses: major depressive disorder,

suicidal ideation, bipolar manic episodes, and PTSD. Various treatments were tried, including medications, inpatient and outpatient hospitalizations, and even a witch doctor in Nigeria.

Growing up I had no positive male role models, which only reinforced my hatred of being a male and growing up into a man. Sexual abuse which occurred during my formative years is the primary reason why I felt the desire and need to “medically transition” from male to female.

My Kaiser family therapist never questioned my self-proclaimed identity or desire for these cosmetic surgeries by asking, “Why do you think you’re transgender?” The answers to that question would have led him directly to my adverse childhood experiences and may have kept me from the additional psychological and physical harm that transition has brought to my life. But that question was never asked. No in depth physical or mental health evaluation was conducted. He didn’t take a holistic or objective approach to psychotherapy. Once he diagnosed me with “gender identity disorder,” then “gender dysphoria,” my other diagnoses (and their possible origins) were completely ignored. His goal was to facilitate my medical transition, and he encouraged and provided referrals to Kaiser Permanente surgeons. He was following the “affirmation model” that is touted as “life-saving.” It has ruined my life.

To this day, I have ongoing medical complications, these include frequent bleeding, urinary incontinence, and urinary tract infections. Arguably, my physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing has worsened as a result of cross-sex hormones and cosmetic surgeries. I can’t reverse my vaginoplasty or facial feminization surgery, and the consequences of these surgeries are permanent. And I cannot ever get back the years of time that I’ve lost going on a fool’s errand—believing I was transgender—rather than getting the psychotherapy I deserved.

I was the sacred cow: a black transwoman. All of my problems were supposed to be solved when I was “affirmed”; instead, they have been compounded, and I have been abandoned by the movement that wears buttons and holds signs claiming support for people like me.

When I was a child, I needed real support to address my adverse childhood experiences. Today, I’m asking that you close the door to harmful “gender-affirming care,” and open the door for children to get the help they deserve. I am in support of Ohio House Bill 68 to help protect children from the lifelong consequences that I am currently experiencing.