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Becoming Nicole

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Becoming Nicole

BY: Ivana Valencia, Veer Gulia, and Robin Williams
Gender

- What is Gender?
  - It isn’t Biology but rather a Social Identity
- Why is the distinction important?
  - It means that Gender much like Society is defined by Us

- Should our Identity be dictated by Society?
  - If America is a Society founded on freedom, why do we allow it to Constrict our citizens freedom of identity?
Nicole’s Experience

As A Child (Wyatt)
- Immediately knew he was different
- Portrayed Feminine characteristics
- Parents believed he was just being dramatic

As A Pre-Teen (Wyatt)
- Very Self-conscious about body
- Developed elevated anxiety symptoms
- Frustrated by the fact that he can’t be his true self

Becoming Nicole
- First stage: Adopted the name Nicole
- Second stage: Secured a full female wardrobe
- Final stage: Getting Sex Reassignment Surgery
Parenting: “Not Ruining Your Kid”

**Wayne**
- Expected a son
- Wanted a “normal” relationship
- Distanced himself from the family
- Slowly coped with Wyatt becoming Nicole
- Fought for his daughter
- Proud of the people their kids became

**Kelly**
- Had no expectation for her child
- Wanted to keep her child happy
- Did research to understand her child
- Fought for her daughter
- Created a safe environment for her child
- Proud of the people their kids became
Understanding the Other

Perceived Other

- “The Crossdresser”
- “They’re just Gay”
- “Bad Parenting”
  - “They wanted a girl/boy”
- “They’re invading our Bathrooms”
- “They are costing us taxpayer money”
- “Infecting our youth”
Gender roles: Naturally Divisive

Why they were created:

- Societies define gender therefore...
  - The 2 gender system was created to fit a society
  - Accommodating Intersex complicates the system
- Social Control/Order
  - Gender is largely role based
- Examples

How they are upheld:

- Religious sentiment
- Legal loopholes
- Lack of education
  - Fear of the other
- Reluctance to change
  - Even on small issues
The Opposition (In the Book)

- **The Grandpa**
  - Prejudice is taught
  - Confusing the idea with the person

- **The Principal**
  - The dangers of inactivity

- **Christian Civic League**
  - Freedom of speech does not mean freedom to harass
Jonas’ Perspective

- **Who is he?**
  - The twin brother
  - The Best friend
  - The classmate

- **Why is he important?**
  - Not all of us can be Nicole
Pictures of Nicole
## Trans Community At IWU

### Meaning of Being Trans
- Being a gender that differs from that was assigned at birth
- Truly being who they really were the whole time
- Taking hormones and socially transitioning due to dysphoria

### Coming Out
- **Friends:**
  - Were immediately accepting and not surprised
- **Family:**
  - Experienced confusion & later anger
  - Reject that part of their child’s identity
  - Denied legal permission to access medical care

### Discrimination
- Not faced discrimination from IWU Staff
- **Peers:**
  - A target of many rumors
  - Social rejection
  - Lack of respect for privacy
  - Other issues...
What can IWU Do?

- More education
- Following through with anti-harassment & anti-discrimination policies
- Individual students:
  - Not outing students as transgender
  - Lack of tolerance on students who express transphobia, sexism, or racism
In Summation

- Challenging the idea not the person
- Question why the status quo exists and how long has it been the norm?
- Society should change to fit its citizens not the other way around.