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Great Outings of History

Getting Sprung through the Ages

by Aidy Griffen

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Olympic Athlete, Stella Walsh

Part of tranny folklore and folk knowledge revolves around the phobia of being 'sprung'. It has happened to the worst of us and, though they are often loath to admit it, the best of us. Some trannys accept it philosophically, shrugging their shoulders and murmuring that it goes with the territory. For others it can be traumatic and soul destroying. But whatever your personal reaction, your problem probably won't be as severe as the following cases. In fact, the following cases may count as among the most drastic cases of being 'sprung' in history.

Poor Billy [Tipton], he had successfully crossed the gender divide for a lifetime only to be sprung, posthumously, by an undertaker

The ninth century of European history produced the intriguing case of the person who has become widely known as Pope Joan. In the year of our lord, 855, Pope Leo IV, passed away and was succeeded by Pope John VIII. The new Pope is popularly referred to nowadays as Pope Joan, for it seems that 'he' turned out to be a 'she'. In what must surely count as one of history's most startling exposures, it is said that the new Pope died during childbirth, apparently on the steps of the then St. Peters. It is said that her death, together with that of the offspring was witnessed by a large number of people, according to a report issued by one of her successors, Pope Julius III. Not only did they witness his/her death, it seems they actively participated in it - for poor Pope Joan was stoned to death.

Rumour has it that to this day, there is a special chair in the Vatican upon newly elected Popes are required to sit. This chair is said to have a hole cut in the seat. The newly elected Pope sits on the chair and displays his genitals through the hole, so that it can be independently confirmed that he is properly credentialed for the job. It is unclear whether this involves dropping his daks or lifting his drag. A psychoanalytic or even a symbolic analysis of this ritual would be, dare I suggest, rather revealing.

Was poor Pope Joan hounded into his/her grave by genderphobes, it would be rash to assume that the harassment stopped there, or even that things have improved with time. Prejudice is not cured by the passing of time. For some, after a lifetime of successfully living in their chosen gender and of achievement in that gender, there was simply no escape from the hate-crazed psychos who police gender.

In 1989, the death of Billy Tipton, a well known jazz musician and bandleader was reported. Upon Billy's death, the funeral director discovered that Billy, married with three adopted children, was in fact female. One of Billy's sons, with admirable loyalty, commented "He'll always be Dad to me". Dick O'Neill, Billy's drummer for a ten year period, could remember instances of Billy's 'masculinity' being questioned: "But I would almost fight anyone who said that, I never suspected a thing". Billy's ex-wife, who seems not to have been aware of Billy's real past, justified Billy thus: "there were certain rules and regulations in those days (i.e. rules of female exclusion) if you were going to be a musician". Poor Billy, he had successfully crossed the gender divide for a lifetime only to be sprung, posthumously, by an undertaker.



Jazz Musician, Billy Tipton

A similar fate awaited Stella Walsh, a naturalised American who had formerly been a Polish runner and competitor at the 1932 Olympics, where she won a gold medal. In 1980, after a lifetime as living as female, she was caught in crossfire during an attempted bank robbery in the U.S. She died of gunshot wounds. Following the less than necessary intervention of the local undertaker, it was revealed that Sheila possessed male genitals. Suddenly, recollections of her 'man-like' stride poured forth from people who had failed to notice or remark about it for the previous half century. In an act of regrettable pettiness, the International Olympic Committee demanded and received the return of her gold medal. What an ignominious fate! Gender fluid people will sympathize, while making a mental note never to trust an undertaker, no matter how cheap their rates. The relentless tyranny of assigned gender roles are only too familiar. Nowadays, it seems, even death is no escape.

Stella Walsh

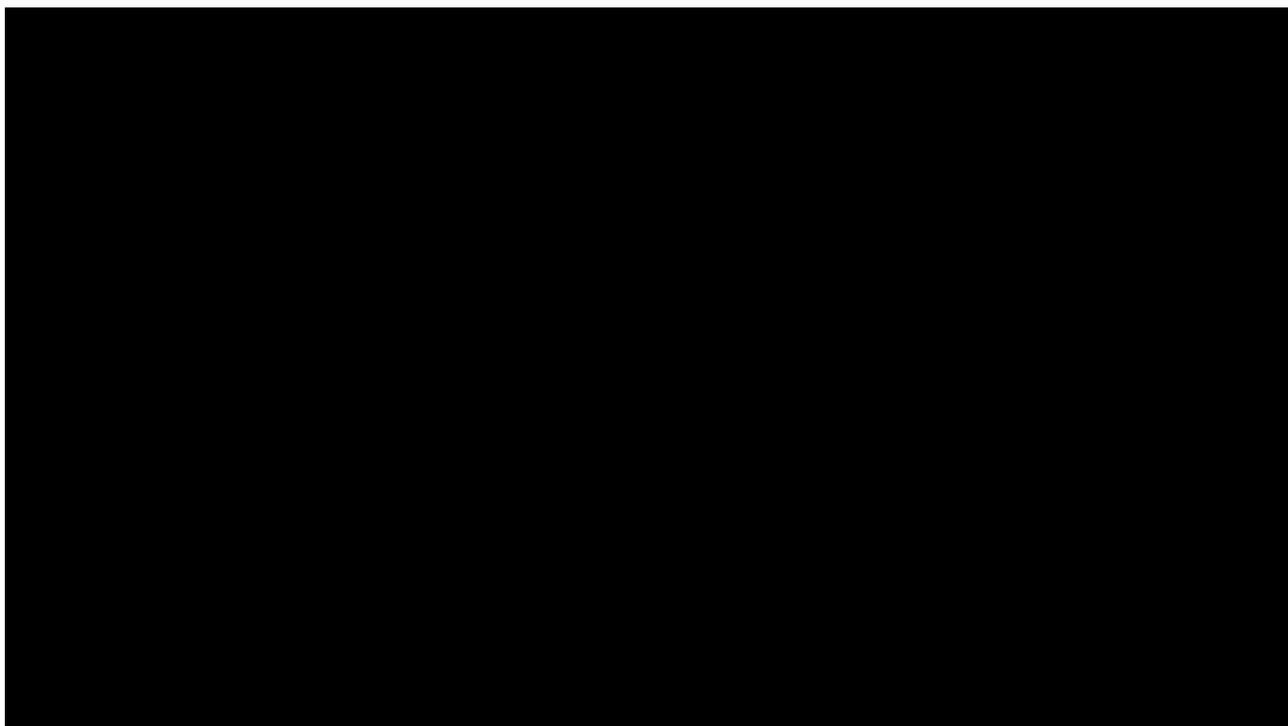
Edited from Wikipedia:  Born in 1911, Stanisława Walasiewicz, also known as Stella Walsh was three months old when her family emigrated to the United States. Fast and agile, she started her athletic career while at public school in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1927 she easily won the competition for a place in the American Olympic team, however, she was not an American citizen and could not obtain citizenship under the age of twenty-one. The success of Halina Konopacka, a Polish athlete who won gold in the discus throw at the 1928 Summer Olympics, inspired Walsh to join the local branch of Sokół, a Polish sports and patriotic organization active among the Polish diaspora. By the late 1920s she was already a well-known athlete winning numerous American national championships, usually under the name of Stella Walsh.



Despite finally being offered American citizenship she changed her mind and instead adopted Polish citizenship that had been offered to her by the Polish consulate in New York.

In the 1932 Summer Olympics she equalled the then current world record of 11.9 seconds in both the heats and the semi-finals of the 100m, a feat she repeated in the final which she won. Upon her return to Poland she almost instantly became a well-known personality. She was welcomed by gigantic crowds in the port of Gdynia, and a few days later, she was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit for her achievements. She was also again chosen the most popular Polish person in sports and held that title for three years. In the 1936 Olympics in Berlin she attempted to defend her Olympic title; but was beaten to the title, coming second, in 11.7 seconds. Ironically in hindsight, Stephens was accused of being male and was forced to submit to a genital inspection to prove otherwise. After the Olympic Games, Stella declared her plans to retire from an active sports career but changed her mind and instead moved back to the United States where she resumed her amateur career. After the war, in 1947 she finally accepted American citizenship and married boxer Neil Olson. Although the marriage did not last long, she continued to use the name Stella Walsh Olson for the rest of her life. She won her last United States title in 1951 at age forty, and was inducted into the U.S. Track and Field Hall of Fame in 1975.

Walsh was killed during an armed robbery in Cleveland, Ohio, on 4 December 1980. An autopsy showed that she possessed male genitalia, although some sources suggest she also displayed some female characteristics. Detailed investigations have also revealed that she had both 45X0 and 46XX chromosomes. The controversy of her biological sex remains unresolved, and the situation is further complicated by the fact that many earlier documents, including her birth record, state that she was female. There was also some controversy as to whether all her records and achievements should be erased.



A short documentary is in production about the track athlete and Olympic gold medal-winner Stella Walsh, her murder, and the controversy surrounding her gender identity. Information about the documentary can be found on the [Stella Walsh website](#)  and the [Stella Walsh Documentary Facebook page](#) . Producers of the documentary are also asking for help in completing their documentary by reaching out to the Cleveland, Ohio community for people who knew or have information, photos, and/or video about Stella Walsh and can be contacted by [email](#) . 

Further Information

[The Bilerico Project](#) : Stella Walsh's Secret 

[The Washington Post](#) : The Runner's Secret 

Billy Tipton



From Wikipedia:  Billy Tipton (1914–1989) was an American jazz musician and bandleader. Born in Oklahoma, U.S.A., he grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A., where he was raised by an aunt after his parents' divorce. As a high-school student, Tipton went by the nickname Tippy and became interested in music, especially jazz, studying piano and saxophone, and as he began a more serious music career, he adopted his father's nickname, Billy, and was more actively working to pass as male by breast binding and packing. At first, he only presented as male in performance, but by 1940 was living as a man in his private life as well.

Billy played with many different house bands throughout the United States, occasionally touring with them before establishing the Billy Tipton Trio, which consisted of Tipton on piano, Dick O'Neil on drums, and Kenny Richards (and later Ron Kilde) on bass. The trio gained local popularity and during a performance on tour in California, a talent scout from Tops Records heard them play and gave them a contract. The Billy Tipton Trio recorded two albums of jazz standards, namely "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "Billy Tipton Plays Hi-Fi on Piano", both released early in 1957. The Trio continued until the late 1970s, when worsening arthritis forced Tipton to retire from music.

For seven years, Tipton lived with Betty Cox, who was 19 when they became involved. According to Cox, they had a heterosexual relationship. Tipton kept the secret of his extrinsic sexual characteristics from Betty by inventing a story of having been in a serious car accident that had badly damaged his genitals and broken some ribs, so that to protect the damaged chest he had to bind it. From then on, this was what he would tell the women in his life. In 1960, he ended this relationship to settle down with nightclub dancer and stripper Kitty Kelly. They adopted three sons, John, Scott, and William. After Tipton's death, Kitty gave several interviews about him and their relationship. William described Tipton as a good father who loved to go on Scout camping trips. Their adopted sons became difficult to manage during their adolescence. Because of the couple's ongoing arguments over how they should raise the boys, Tipton left Kitty in the late 1970s, moved into a mobile home with their sons, and resumed an old relationship with a woman named Maryann. He remained there, living in poverty, until his death.

In 1989, at the age of 74, Tipton had symptoms he attributed to emphysema and refused to call a doctor. Actually he was suffering from a haemorrhaging peptic ulcer, which, untreated, was fatal. It was while paramedics were trying to save Tipton's life, with son William looking on, that William learned that his father had female anatomy. Tipton was pronounced dead at Valley General Hospital. The coroner shared this with the rest of the family. In an attempt to keep the secret, Kitty arranged for his body to be cremated, but one of their sons went public with the story. The first newspaper article was published the day after Tipton's funeral and it was quickly picked up by wire services. Stories about Tipton appeared in a variety of papers including tabloids, as well as more reputable papers such as *New York Magazine* and *The Seattle Times*.



Suits Me: The Double Life of Billy Tipton

Author: Diane Wood Middlebrook

Published Mariner Books (1999)

I.S.B.N.-13 978-0395957899

From Amazon Books:  The jazz pianist Billy Tipton was born in Oklahoma City as Dorothy Tipton, but almost nobody knew the truth until the day he died, in Spokane in 1989. Over a fifty-year performing career, Billy Tipton fooled nearly everyone, including Duke Ellington and Norma Teagarden, five successive wives with whom Billy lived as a man, and three children to whom he was father. As Billy Tipton himself said, "Some people might think I'm a freak or a hermaphrodite.

I'm not. I'm a normal person. This has been my choice". This jazz-era biography evokes the rich popular-music history of the Great Depression and reads like a detective story.

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