

**My Story
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I was born in the late 70's, so by the time I was 10, the 80's were coming to a close and supposedly the womens' movement was finished. I would hear about back in the day that women weren't equal. My mom told me once, that when she was in high school she had to wear a skirt or dress, but now she can wear pants. It was the 90's and Sinead O'Connor looked so sexy and feminine with her smooth shaved head, while Kurt Cobain looked so cute and confident in his dresses. These were the images that I saw on Mtv as I went to high school.

I always thought I was a boy because that's what everyone told me; but it didn't matter, none of my friends seemed to mind when I would show up wearing make-up and a skirt. My problems didn't really begin until I had to look for a job. That's when all of my problems began.

I was graduating from the university and every job or company that I looked into had such strict dress codes. I thought that by now there would be careers that no longer had the sexist rules which I had heard so much about. But alas! Everyone wanted me to wear a shirt and tie.

I couldn't though, and the fear of becoming trapped in a job where I would have to dress that way everyday was enough to make me turn down job after job until I had no more prospects. I didn't know what to do.

When I was attending the university I had a job at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, and I decided to stay there after I graduated until I could figure out what to do about my situation. I would never go out after work with my coworkers because I didn't want to be seen in public dressed like a guy. Though, I already interacted with the public at work and all of my friends had seen me wearing boys clothes. It's embarrassing for me, so I stopped going out altogether, I was too ashamed. As time went on, all I did was work and go home.

I would see my female coworkers and be so jealous of how they were allowed to dress. It wasn't fair. We are all people! Why can they dress a particular way, but not I? Everytime I went to work I would be reminded that there is still a lot of sexism in our society and that I do not yet have equal rights.

Separate is not equal and separate rules for each sex is unfair and unequal. All I ever wanted, all I want now is to have some basic rights. The right to wear a skirt, the right to wear make-up, and the right to have a name that ends in the letter "a."

I cannot do these things and have a job at the same time, now. These are not things that can be easily juggled. Shaping my eyebrows and growing my nails long cannot be undone for work and then fixed when I get home. They take weeks to change from one way to the other. I just want to be able to work.

If there had been a law that protected Gender Identity and Expression when I was in college, then I would have been able to be anything . . . until this does become the law, I am lucky if I can just find a job at all.