

San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

December 15, 1997

Ms. Torey Tuesday South
Inmate J-39424 5263
California Men's Colony
P.O. Box 9101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93409-8101

Dear Torey:

I am sorry to have delayed my response to your November 22 letter. I did, indeed, receive it -- as well as your December 10 follow-up -- so don't be concerned. I am afraid I have been gone from the office for a while and have foundered slightly in trying to get back in step once I returned.

Don't apologize for writing such long letters. Your experiences and views are fascinating to me, and I would rather have more information and detail than less -- it makes writing about someone that much easier when I have so much material in her own words that I can quote directly.

Unfortunately, things have been necessarily moving at a glacial pace on my end. I have not been able to steal the time to do even the most basic research on your story yet. For basic details about your case, I need to review the court file in San Jose (and will probably have to make two trips to see it, as I almost certainly will have to order it from storage). I also need to go to Fairfield to look at the criminal case against Sergeant Kent, and will have to spend a whole day (minimum) in Sacramento reviewing the materials in your original U.S. District Court lawsuit against the Department of Corrections. I have been tied up with a bunch of loose ends -- primary old projects from 1997 that are winding down -- and am trying to clear the way so I can begin working on your story in earnest as soon after January 1 as possible.

I had lunch with Shawna Virago last week and she was very helpful and concerned about your status at CMC San Luis Obispo. She said she would do what she could to help me work on your story, and she offered to put me in contact with some other sources who may be able to offer assistance. I found Shawna a very impressive woman, and it occurs to me that you have managed to enlist some very valuable allies in your fight for your rights.

I will be calling both Janice and Susan Christian later today, and hope to arrange a meeting with Susan during the time I spend in Sacramento in early January.

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I apologize for my slow start on this project, because I am sure it is excruciating for you to be in prison, waiting for word from outside, without any way of knowing what is going on.

Although all this background research is necessary and useful, it is no substitute for being able to actually meet with you and talk with you in person. I am going to see whether Susan thinks it would be possible for me to arrange a meeting and at least a preliminary interview with you early next year at CMC, although my guess is the Department of Corrections will be unwilling to allow it under their new media guidelines.

Although I think readers of my newspaper will find your story gripping, it seems too big and complex to be limited to a simple newspaper article. Although I have been a reporter for more than 20 years, I can't recall ever coming across a tale with so much inherent drama, and I really look forward to learning the details of your life as a transgendered child and youth, your entry into the Armed Forces as a man (and member of a specialized military unit), your years as a fugitive woman, your surrender to and eventual imprisonment by the authorities, and your fight to keep your identity as a woman while incarcerated in a prison for men.

I will be perfectly honest with you - I think that your story would make an extraordinary book, and I would love to work with you on it if you are interested. If so, please let me know. Don't decide until you have had an opportunity to talk to Susan about it; I am planning to mention my interest in this project to her when I call her today.

In the meantime, stay strong. I look forward to meeting you, at least after your release if it is not possible to arrange direct contact earlier.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Wallace". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Yours,".

Bill Wallace, Staff Writer

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