

# America's Stockholm Syndrome

Gabrielle Ludwig is 6-feet 6-inches tall and weighs 220 pounds. 'She' plays basketball for the Lady Saints, the women's basketball team at Mission College in Santa Clara, California. Gabrielle is the former Robert John Ludwig. Gabrielle is a surgically altered and hormone-induced woman.

*"As someone living as a woman and taking female hormones since 2007, Ludwig was eligible to play in the NCAA. Transgender student athletes who have taken medication to suppress testosterone for a year may compete on women's teams under a policy adopted last year."*

Ludwig is 50 years old. Under any other set of circumstances such an absurd thing would never happen. But in our day of unlimited toleration (unless you don't believe in tolerating such things) even the bizarre has become normalized.

If you can dream, you can become it, even if it means turning a giant of a man into a giant of a woman to play college basketball.

If you or I speak out in denouncement of normalizing gender "reassignment surgery," we will be declared the worst type of bigots. And it seems that Ludwig's real female teammates don't have a problem with their 50-year-old teammate masquerading as a woman:

*Teammate Amy Woo, 19, said Ludwig has brought a maternal influence, helping the team keep problems in perspective. "We all love her," Woo said. "If someone is going to talk against her, they are talking against all of us because it's like she is part of a family."*

If anyone talks against her? Ms. Woo has been morally lobotomized. I can feel sorry for Mr. Ludwig, but I can't condone his radical decision to make himself into a fictional woman. Ms. Woo and her teammates have an educational form of the Stockholm Syndrome; they've been in government schools too long and have identified with their captors.

*"Stockholm syndrome, or capture-bonding, is a psychological phenomenon in which hostages express empathy, sympathy and have positive feelings towards their captors, sometimes to the point of defending them."*

It happened to Patty Hearst, who was abducted by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974. She bonded with her captives so well that she took on a new name and became an accomplice in a bank robbery.

In 1985, two gun-toting terrorists forced their way into the cockpit of TWA Flight 847 and demanded that the plane touchdown in Lebanon. "Once on the ground, they held passengers captive, threatened them with guns and murdered one hostage, dumping his body onto the tarmac. Nonetheless, after the captives were rescued, one of them reportedly later said of his captors, 'They weren't bad people; they let me eat, they let me sleep, they gave me my life.'"

Such “moral turning” doesn’t happen to everybody who’s been either physically abducted or educationally abducted, but there are enough of them that it does happen to that its effect is spread throughout the culture.

Kay Haugaard began teaching creative writing in 1970. As with most of her classes, students read and discuss Shirley Jackson’s short story “The Lottery.” Jackson’s lottery isn’t about winning millions of dollars by picking the right series of numbers; it’s about human sacrifice that a small town accepts and takes part in with no questions asked.

As the years of teaching this story have passed, Haugaard began to see a change in the moral perceptions of her students. Their views on right and wrong had been dulled by the rhetoric of moral neutrality, “the danger of just ‘going along’ with something habitually, without examining its rationale and value.”[1] Haugaard’s closing comments are chilling:

*No one in the whole class of more than twenty ostensibly intelligent individuals would go out on a limb and take a stand against human sacrifice.*

*[Here’s how] I wound up the discussion. “Frankly, I feel it’s clear that the author was pointing out the dangers of being totally accepting followers, too cowardly to rebel against obvious cruelties and injustices.” I was shaken, and I thought that the author, whose story had shocked so many [in past years], would have been shaken as well.*

*The class finally ended. It was a warm night when I walked to my car after class that evening, but I felt shivery, chilled to the bone.[2]*

We’ve become a nation of moral bystanders. Deep down we know certain behaviors are wrong, but we’ve been cajoled into believing that nothing can be said in objection to the new amoral climate. If we do react, we are labeled “intolerant” and “insensitive” to different “lifestyle choices.”

Gary DeMar

Endnotes:

1.Kay Haugaard, “The Lottery Revisited,” *Unriddling Our Times: Reflections on the Gathering Cultural Crisis*, ed. Os Guinness (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 138.

2.Haugaard, “The Lottery Revisited,” 141. [↔]

### Thought Questions:

1. By what standard do we judge whether something is moral or ethical?
2. Is “legal” the same as “moral”?
3. How does the dominant culture of a society put pressure on Christians to conform?  
What techniques? What tools?
4. What should Christians do to protect themselves and their children?
5. What should churches do in response to moral challenges in society?