Transgressed Bodies

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Transgressed bodies

By Estephani Cano

In 2005, desperate to feminize her figure, Paola Gil, a 43-year-old trans woman from Guatemala, decided to get silicone injections in her hips for $1,000. Two hours after the illegal procedure, she started vomiting and defecating blood. She ended up in a coma in the hospital for a month.

The medical record shows that Paola received a silicone injection mixed with mineral and castor oil. She still suffers serious consequences, including difficulty walking, kidney and liver failure, and depression, after seeing her body disfigured.
“I saw other trans women with curvy bodies and I thought, if they can do it, so can I,” she said. “I did not know what she was injecting me ... I was afraid I was going to die.”

Because of discrimination, lack of economic resources, and misinformation, many trans women like Paola see liquid silicone and other illegal injectable elements as their only option to modify their bodies and have a faster physical transition to the body that reflects the gender they identify with. But the consequences can be fatal.
After the injections of mineral and castor oils combined with silicone, Paola ended up in a month-long coma.

**Transgressed Bodies** explores the stories of two trans women who have suffered terrible health problems after receiving silicone injections and other dangerous elements. The film shows the raw reality that a lot of trans women experience which is unknown or ignored by many.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), has banned the use of liquid silicone for any type of aesthetic procedure. But Paola’s case is but one example of the high demand across the nation for silicone injections among transgender women who want to feminize their figure, even though those injections are illegal, can be life-threatening, can create deformities, and cause serious long-term health problems.
Nevertheless, silicone injections remain popular on the black market due to their immediate effects on the increased size of buttocks, breasts, and as facial fillers.

Despite the dangers, transgender women, can't resist the temptation of this injectable plastic. For one, it's cheaper than more conventional medical procedures. While a breast augmentation surgery in a certified clinic ranges between $3,000 and $8,000, and a Brazilian butt lift costs between $3,000 and $6,000, a full complement of liquid silicone injections for the face, hips, and breasts, costs between $500 and $1,200. The effects are also immediate.
Rajee Narinesingh, 51, is a transgender actress, activist, and author who despite being injected with industrial silicone mixed with cement and fix a flat for tires in her face, turned her hardship into a platform to advocate for LGBTQ rights.

**Transgressed Bodies** is a story about resilience. The characters have gone through terrible situations of violence and discrimination. They also feel that the silicone in their bodies is equivalent to a terminal illness because they know that at any moment it can migrate causing arterial or venous embolisms which can lead to amputation or death. But they continue to struggle to fulfill their dreams and help others to have a normal life.