

Books / *Mopsy Strange Kennedy*

## TRANSFORMATION

A LOCAL ADMAN'S MEMOIR CHRONICLES HIS MOST PERSONAL REBRANDING CAMPAIGN.

**Balls by Chris Edwards**

Published by Greenleaf Book Group, 272 pages, \$25

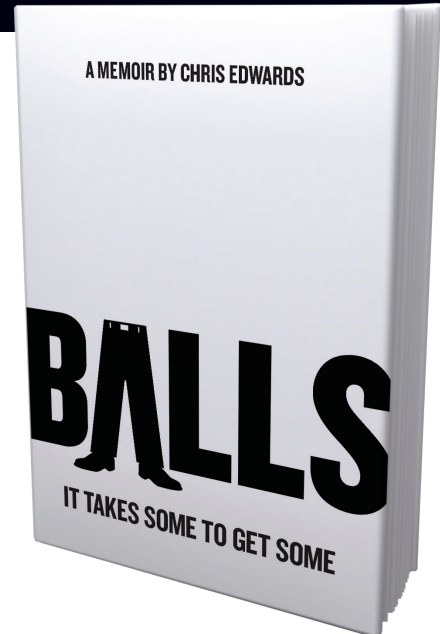
LET'S START WITH THE WIT AND BUOYANCY of Chris Edwards, whose father was the CEO of Arnold Worldwide, the advertising firm where Chris worked as a copywriter and creative director. Now the book's story: Chris was born Kristin and started transitioning in the mid-'90s, a time when the term "transgender" was in very few vocabularies.

You might expect a forgivably ponderous book, but Chris makes it adventurous and fun—even when describing 28 surgeries that took about a decade. But first, we watch as Kris carefully tells friends and co-workers of his intentions, preparing them, and himself, for the personal, psychological and physical drama ahead. Drawing on his marketing know-how, he enlists them as "brand evangelists" for Team Edwards and briefs a boardroom of executives on the new Chris. One big plus: His family was highly sympathetic, and his mother was present at many sensitive medical events, which are candidly chronicled

in chapters with titles like "Take my uterus. Please." Nurses and friends appreciate the brave charm of our hero, and two doctors become almost like mischievous friends amid challenging surgeries, including ones to transform the skin on his arm, smoothed with painful laser treatments, into a long-sought badge of masculine identity: a "deluxe model" penis.

As the medical ordeals end, love interests come and go; surgery, fortunately, had not removed his sense of humor, even when an intercourse-enabling pump fails. Then, wonderfully, he finds Mary, and they spend years in love, traveling exotically together. The author draws a veil over the details, maintaining well-deserved privacy, at last.

**FROM PAGE 115:** *And once I put on the black onyx cufflinks and studs, black silk bowtie and cummerbund, and shiny patent leather tuxedo shoes, I took a look in the mirror. Holy shit! Who let James Bond in here? On a scale of 1 to 10, I was definitely a 007. And when I strode into the Harvard Club, just one among a sea of penguins, I finally felt like I belonged to a different club—the one I'd been denied entry to since birth.* ♦



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