

The Salt Lake Tribune

SATURDAY July 03, 2004

Sex change leads to lawsuit against UTA

By Pamela Manson
The Salt Lake Tribune

A former bus driver who was born a man but is becoming a woman sued the Utah Transit Authority on Friday, claiming the agency fired him because he failed to conform to stereotypical male behavior.

Krystal S. Etsitty, who was born a biological male named Michael R. Etsitty and is planning to undergo a sex change operation, contends UTA officials said they had to let him go because he looked like a female and they were afraid of what the public and other employees would think.

In addition, they expressed concerns about which restroom he would use, Etsitty alleges in his lawsuit.

The legal action, which was filed in U.S. District Court and accuses the UTA of sex stereotyping and gender discrimination, seeks unspecified damages. It uses male pronouns because the claims are based on Etsitty's biological sex.

Justin Jones, a UTA spokesman, said Friday that the agency has not seen the lawsuit.

However, he said, "We cannot comment on current litigation but UTA does have policies in place that ensure we are in compliance with the equal opportunity laws."

The suit says the 41-year-old Etsitty has been diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder and decided in the late 1990s to begin a transition to female, which he considers his true sexual identity. It says he changed his name then and began hormone therapy under the direction of his physician.

When he applied at UTA, he put down "Krystal Etsitty" on his application, according to the suit. It says that at his job interview, Etsitty had medium length hair, wore minimal makeup and was dressed in gender-neutral clothes, a pair of khakis and a shirt.


Etsitty, who began work in December 2001, said he put Krystal on his name badge and slowly began to make his appearance more feminine by wearing more makeup and acrylic finger nails.

After UTA officials heard about the changes, an operations manager and human resources officer told him they were unable to accommodate him, the suit claims. He was forced out in February 2002, it says.

The U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission, where Etsitty first filed a complaint, issued a report last year saying there is "reasonable cause" to believe his civil rights were violated.

"The Commission has previously determined that employers may not discriminate against an individual because he or she fails to act in the way expected of a male or female," the report says.

pmanson@sltrib.com

 Print This | [◀ Previous](#) | [Next ▶](#)

© Copyright 2004, The Salt Lake Tribune.

All material found on Utah Online is copyrighted The Salt Lake Tribune and associated news services. No material may be reproduced or reused without explicit permission from The Salt Lake Tribune.
