Letter to the Editor

Face transplants

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A few years ago I wrote a novel called *Transformations*. It was the story of a Cajun woman in New Orleans who became a nurse and then a doctor of extraordinary talent who developed a method of face transplant. She worked for what was then called “the Mob” who paid her way through medical school because she came from an impoverished Cajun family. In return, she was to take care of the Mob’s sick and ailing members. Her intention was to remove the face from a dead body in the morgue and transplant it onto a mob member so that he could not be recognized in society. Finger prints were also transplanted. It was my fantasy then but has since been successfully done in France on a woman whose face literally had been torn off by an animal.

I mention all this because of the legal ramifications of this new procedure which will become more common and perfected in the future. This method of transplant needs to be regulated by law because it is a procedure that has dangerous consequences for law enforcement. The procedure should be registered and reported to police agencies. Doctors would have a strict obligation of reporting this procedure under pain of losing their license and paying a heavy fine. Just think of law enforcement when they can no longer recognize the face or finger prints of a known criminal. This procedure may be used for great good but also for great evil. It must be controlled by law by submitting names and a picture record of before and after images of the face to authorities.