

The Man Who Became Celine Dion and **OTHER ADVENTURES IN NAME CHANGES**

WRITTEN BY JOHN G. BROWNING

THE COMBINATION OF ALCOHOL, the pandemic, and the internet can be a potent one indeed; just ask Mr. Celine Dion—formerly known as Thomas Dodd. The 30-year-old hospitality manager from Staffordshire, England, is a big fan of Canadian songstress Celine Dion, so much so that he

legally changed his name to “Celine Dion.” The former Mr. Dodd said he spent much of the pandemic watching Dion concerts on television, and on Christmas Eve, after “getting rather tipsy,” he filed the paperwork online to legally change his name. Days later, he was reminded of his inebriated decision when the documentation officially making him “Mr. Celine Dion” arrived in the mail. “I honestly, hand on heart, don’t remember doing it,” he said. Nevertheless, you might say it’s all coming back to him now. And Mr. Dion f/k/a Dodd said his heart, and the name change, will go on because he’s planning on keeping his new legal moniker, no matter what anyone says.

In fact, alcohol-induced lapses in judgment have accounted for a number of legal name changes, particularly in jurisdictions where (unlike Texas) it can be accomplished without court approval. Simon Smith, 33, of the United Kingdom, admitted that he’d had more than a few pints at the pub before venturing online to change his name to honor his favorite fast food. Now he’s legally Mr. “Bacon Double Cheeseburger.” Often, however, the reasons are more personal. David Lynn Porter, 54, had his name legally changed to “Santa Claus” in “the spirit of giving and caring for kids” and because “I’ve always loved Christmas.” Meanwhile, in 2008, 57-year-old Illinois artist Steve Kreuzer changed his name to “In God We Trust” as a

way of honoring the help God gave him during tough times. Two years later, he changed it to “One Nation Under God.”

Sometimes, hero worship or superfandom is the reason for a name change. That explains how George Garret, of Glastonbury, England, became “Captain Fantastic Faster Than Superman Spiderman Batman Wolverine Hulk and the Flash Combined” and how Kelvin Borbidge became “Baron Venom Balrog Sabretooth Vader Megatron Vegeta Robotnik Magneto Bison Sephiroth Lex Luthor Skeletor Joker Grind” (who added that he was bored of his day-to-day life). It also explains 23-year-old Daniel Knox-Hewson’s decision in 2011 to legally change his name to “Emperor Spiderman Gandalf Wolverine Skywalker Optimus Prime Goku Sonic Xavier Ryu Cloud Superman Heman Batman Thrash.” Sadly, however, such a name change will not help you meet women or move out of your parents’ basement.

For others, a legal name change is a form of activism for a cause. That’s why animal rights activist Abi Izzard decided to change her name to raise awareness of a London department store’s selling of foie gras (produced by the force-feeding of geese). She’s now “StopFortnumAndMasonFoieGrasCruelty.com” and insists she’s never been embarrassed or regretted her name. The same reasoning led Karin Robertson to become “GoVeg.com,” and Brandi Valladolid to change her name to “RinglingBeatsAnimals.com.” Jennifer Thornbury, of North Carolina, legally became “CutoutDissection.com” to protest animal dissections in schools. NBA player Ron Artest famously changed his name to “Metta World Peace” in 2011, and in 2006, strawberry farmer-turned Idaho gubernatorial candidate Marvin Richardson legally became “Pro-Life” so that he could be listed as such on the ballot (spoiler alert: he didn’t win).

Other people arguably come up



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with more practical rationalizations for changing their names. Tim Price, 49, from Leicester, England, was so sick of telemarketing cold callers that he became “Tim P-P-P-P-P-P-P-P-Price” in order to have a name they couldn’t pronounce (his friends call him “10p”). And in 2015, when 19-year-old Adam Armstrong, of Manchester, England, learned that his girlfriend’s stepfather had accidentally purchased vacation airfare for him under the name “Adam West” (and that Ryanair wanted \$337 to change the booking), he found a cheaper solution. Armstrong legally changed his name to “Adam West,” and even the cost of a new passport was cheaper than the airline’s change fee. And 23-year-old entrepreneur Tyler Gould reasoned “name recognition is important,” so he decided to change his name to something more

recognizable: “Tyrannosaurus Rex.” He swears it’s not because he has really tiny arms.

Others change their names because, well, they march to the beat of a different drummer. The former John Rothwell believes, as part of his religion, that he is the reincarnation of King Arthur, and so he is now legally “King Arthur Uther Pendragon.” His U.K. passport (in which he’s pictured wearing a crown) is issued in that name, and let’s face it—flashing that official ID sounds a whole lot easier than having to pull a sword from a stone everywhere you go. Dan Miller, 24, of Akron, Ohio, legally changed his name to “The’ Dan Miller Experience” because, as he put it, “I like to do little things in my life that amuse me.” And when 43-year-old Andrew Wilson, of Branson, Missouri, was asked why he changed his name to

“They,” he said that in a world where people are always saying “They did this,” or “They are to blame,” he figured “somebody had to take responsibility.”

Yes, people have legally adopted some odd names for a variety of reasons. But in a world in which celebrities think little of saddling their kids with names like “Apple,” “Moxie CrimeFighter,” “Kal-El,” and “Pilot Inspektor,” who are we to judge? **TBJ**



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