

Her Husband's **Gun** Violence Leads to First U.S. Face Transplant

<http://www.wowowow.com/relationships/connie-culp-face-transplant-patient-thomas-culp-maria-siemionow-video-pictures-287401>

'Women on the Web'



Connie Culp before her husband's attack
After he shot 80% of her face off
After this nation's first total face transplant

Connie Culp has become the first person to undergo a full face transplant.

Culp, a 46-year-old Ohio resident, was **shot in the face by her husband**, Thomas Culp (<http://www.drc.state.oh.us/OffenderSearch/Search.aspx>), in 2004.

Mr. Culp then turned the gun on himself. **He survived and was sentenced to seven years in jail.**

The incident left Connie Culp without a nose and palate. She has been unable to breathe on her own, eat solid food, smell or smile. Over the last several years, she has undergone reconstructive procedures; however, none of the available treatments could restore her facial functions. Then, in December 2008, a team of eight surgeons at Cleveland Clinic operated on Culp for 22 hours and replaced 80 percent of her face – essentially transplanting the full face, with the exception of her upper eyelids, forehead, lower lip and chin.

The surgery, though successful, has serious risks, including rejection of the tissue. Mrs. Culp will now be committed to lifelong use of immunosuppressing medications, which can lead to infection and other diseases. Some experts question the value of such risk, considering that facial disfigurement is not a life-threatening situation. Facial disfigurement, however, is life-altering, affecting a person's quality of life. Many people with facial disfigurement become recluses, choosing not to be exposed to a public that will stare, taunt or react with fear.