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Julia's Home Town Welcomes Her Back

Thank You, Bathurst

by Julia Doulman

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Julia Doulman, who featured on the cover of *Polare 52*, returned to her home town of Bathurst in October 2003 for a screening of the film *Becoming Julia*, which followed Julia's progress over two years through the process of transition and was one of the hits of the recent Sydney Film Festival.

Uncertain of her reception from the citizens of the country town where she had grown up, she was delighted to find herself taken to the people's hearts. Her own family proved to be the exception, but that was not unexpected. Many of the audience stayed after the screening to say a few words to Julia and to wish her well.

She had been invited to say a few words at the end of the film and the following is a shortened transcript of her speech.

Since both the film and I received a standing ovation from the packed State Theatre in Sydney, I feel a great sense of achievement and self-worth.

First, I would like to thank Ruth Cullen for giving me the opportunity to be the subject of her documentary. I believe she interviewed more than twenty people and I was the lucky one.

Many people have asked how much I was paid to make this film. The truth is I have not been paid a single dollar. My motivation in making this film was and still is to try and dispel the misconceptions held about transgender people. I believe that due to lack of information many people arrive at the wrong conclusion about us. We are not necessarily homosexual, perverted or deviant. Mostly we are ordinary everyday people like the rest of you. I have transgender friends who are lawyers, bus drivers, vet nurses, librarians and waitresses, and yes, a couple of sex workers. These are the same types of jobs that many non-transgender people do. We are people whose brains are at odds with our bodies. It is not an illness but a medical condition known as gender dysphoria, for which there is no known cure. If there were, I most certainly would have preferred that option. The condition can, however, be changed from an intolerable one to a tolerable one by gender reassignment.

What I have received from this film, though, is something priceless. Since both the film and I received a standing ovation from the packed State Theatre in Sydney, I feel a great sense of achievement and self-worth. It is not so long ago that I would not have had the confidence to stand here and speak publicly. Thank you Ruth!

But I would also like to thank you, Bathurst. Four years ago, when I decided to change my gender rather than end my own life I did so in the belief that it would cost me my local community and my home town. I have never been so happy to be wrong in my whole life. I underestimated the level of acceptance and compassion in the Bathurst community. Many of you have not been merely accepting but have extended the hand of friendship and made offers of help during the past two years.


For thirty-six years I lived a lie but my life had become miserable. Being true to myself at last has been the most wonderfully liberating experience of my life. I cannot tell you how good it feels not to want to die. I hope every one of you is enjoying the same level of happiness I now feel.

It is forty years next Tuesday since I was born at the Bathurst District Hospital. Bathurst has always been my home and always will be. My move to Sydney was temporary and I promise you all I will return home soon. I hope you enjoyed watching *Becoming Julia* and can take something positive away with you tonight. Thank you all, and I love you, Bathurst.

Julia Doulman

Becoming Julia

Directed by: Ruth Cullen
Starring: Julia Doulman
Producer: Ruth Cullen
Released: 2003

From Ruth Cullen's website  You can take the boy out of the girl, but a "rev head" lasts forever. Paul is single, straight and thirty-seven and nothing would suggest he is anything other than the regular, car loving "Aussie" he appears to be at first glance. Underneath it is a different story. Paul is transgendered, and although he still lives as a man and looks like a man, over the next twelve months he will undergo a gender change and live as Julia. Filmed by acclaimed film maker Ruth Cullen over a period of two years, *Becoming Julia* explores the deconstruction and recreation of a person. "Paul's initial appeal to me was that he seemed to epitomize the typical Australian bloke in so many ways yet he had no doubt that she was a woman. I was interested in the contrast between the butch male exterior and her inner feminine world and the point of transition where the man I knew became the woman he really was". - Ruth Cullen.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.