

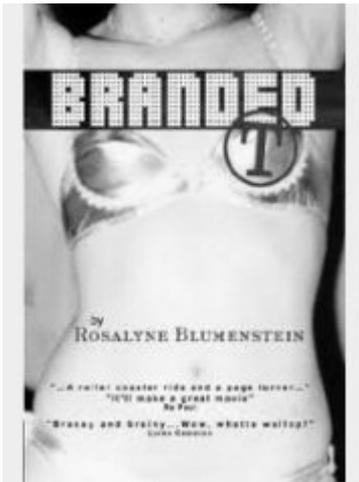
(The Gender Centre advise that this article may not be current and as such certain content, including but not limited to persons, contact details and dates may not apply. Where legal authority or medical related matters are cited, responsibility lies with the reader to obtain the most current relevant legal authority and/or medical publication.)

Book Review: Branded T

A Teenage Runaway and Her Contact with Suicide, Gender Identity Issues, Drug Addiction, and the Sex Industry

Reviewed by Dr. Tracie O'Keefe D.C.H.

Article appeared in Polare magazine: January 2004 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Branded T, by Rosalynne Blumenstein.

Branded T

by Rosalynne Blumenstein
Published by AuthorHouse (2003)
I.S.B.N. -13 978 1410772411

I would say that autobiographies are probably the most difficult books to write in that in writing about oneself, one can be self-indulgent. Blumenstein's account of her life and drug addiction interwoven with the dynamics of her transsexual experience are riveting in an age of fly-on-the-wall entertainment. She certainly digs deep down to the bottom of her soul and confesses all beyond decency, which leads to her revelations being admirable and fascinating. Rarely will you ever read such an honest depiction of debauchery and desperation born out of pills and the need to define oneself as a female having been bar mitzvahed as a Brooklyn pretty boy.

Blumenstein was the brassy blonde who stripped and worked for many years in the peep shows of New York. Tall, slim, pretty and sexy she was the tranny who lived on the streets and survived in the sex industry. "I'm doing ok," she would have told you, but secretly she was living a life of prolonged and enslaving multiple drug use with complex addictions that even today she is still dealing with. What appeared to be a mirage of the mister who became a sister and then the queen of the queens hid someone who had a harrowing

journey to learn how to realise her own potential.

Her story tells how after her transition she got clean, went on to higher education, became a director of the Gender Identity Project, New York, a social worker and a political campaigner for the rights of sex and gender diverse people and learned how to fall in love. For many years she lived in fear of being found out, walking in the shadows and not disclosing her transsexual history to other people. Through her journey she tells us how in many ways it does not matter how well you pass or not, you are your history and what you have become through what you were.

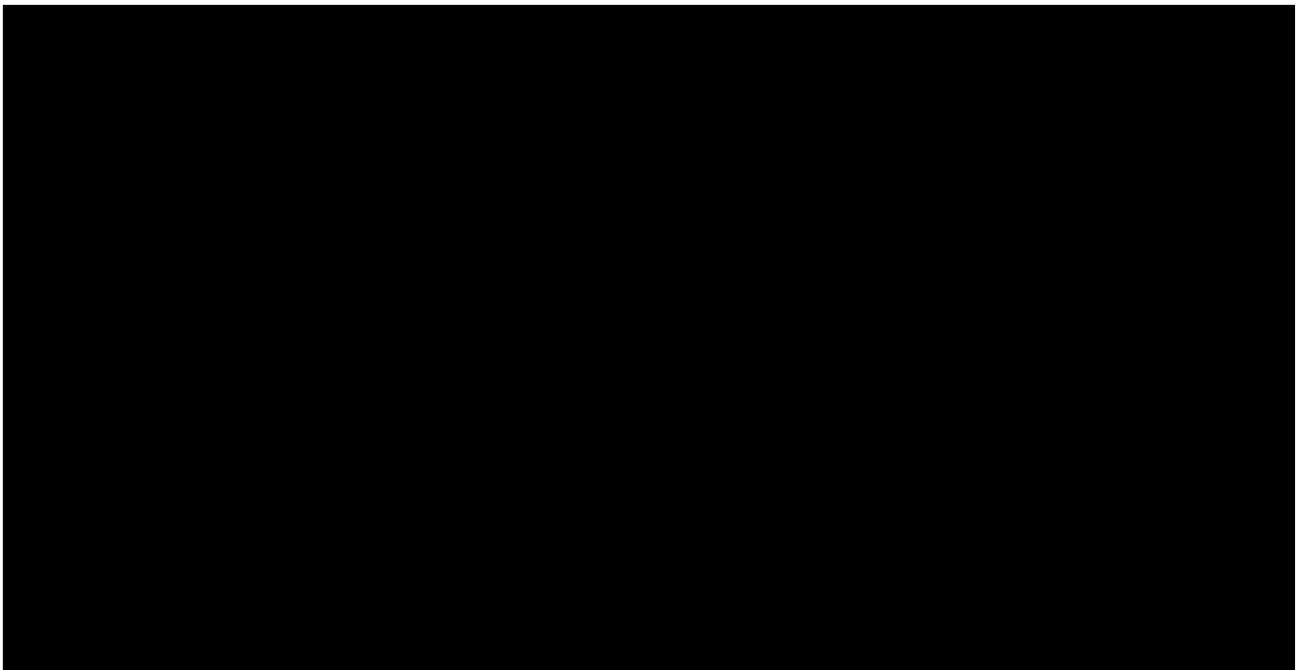
So is this just another tale of a dumb blonde goes public - well no, it's much more than that because her story peels away the layers of illusion about who she really is, what she has become and she lays herself open and vulnerable. It is a great book for anyone dealing with issues of sex and gender honesty in the public eye. It is also the most useful book I have ever read dealing with issues of sex and gender diverse people and addiction. The reader wants her to survive the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, but most of all the unforgivable things she does to herself. You will want her to come back from death's door and be mad at her for taking the long way round, but most of all you will admire her for her honesty. This is the tale of a woman whose brains eluded her until the looks she created for herself began to fade and she evolved into something more than she thought she was.

Rosalynne Blumenstein

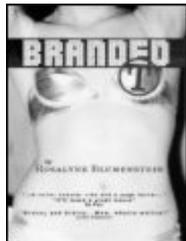
From the (now defunct) Branded T website: Rosalynne Blumenstein M.S.W., Producer, Director, Writer, Editor. Her words are published in psychological and scientific journals, addiction literature, queer academia, national magazines, and newspapers. As a social worker, Rosalynne has taken pride in her addiction and prevention work. As a national consultant and trainer, Rosalynne has taken pride in her ability to educate her audience/s. As a woman of transsexual experience, Rosalynne has taken pride in being a loud-mouth, tell it like it is, sexually provocative native of Brooklyn, New York U.S.A.



In her book *Branded T* Rosalynne has taken pride in sharing, no holds barred, how she has juggled her history of sex work, mental health concerns, addiction, gender identity issues, and academic success. From Canarsie to Times Square, from street corner to city hall ... whether the discussion is sex work or social work, Rosalynne's words, visuals, and truth will mesmerize you!



In 2001, Rosalynne was interviewed by American public access television show *Gay and Loving It*, a video which has kindly been uploaded to You Tube. The interview covers aspects of Rosalynne's life including her activism, social outreach, public speaking and more.



Branded T

Author: Rosalynne Blumenstein
Publisher: AuthorHouse (2003)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1410772411

From Amazon Books:  This is a true story about a teenage runaway, her contact with suicide, gender identity issues, drug addiction, and the sex industry. This is also the anecdote of how recovery opens the door to a healing process and alters the subjugators, one day at a time. 350 pages with 70 pages of expertly integrated historical graphic design interwoven with explicit, thought provoking, progressive text This is what some folks have said about Rosalynne Blumenstein and her book *Branded T* "Blumenstein pulls no punches and neither did her life on the mean streets". - Loren Cameron, Photographer, *Body Alchemy* "It is a tale of sheer enduring spirit. She takes us from the flesh bars of Broadway to Graduate School, from New York to Los Angeles, from shame to self-confidence. I hung on every word". - Dallas Denny, Editor, *Transgender Tapestry* magazine. "I loved this book! What an incredible journey! Not only is this the story of Rosalynne's life, but also the story of so many people whose lives would have gone undocumented until now. Another fabulous aspect of the book is how it chronicles the history of a very exciting era in New York City. The perspective is fresh and enlightening, unique and empowering. It'll make a great movie!" - RuPaul, Performer/Author *Lettin it all hang out*.

Polare Magazine is published quarterly in Australia by The Gender Centre Inc., which is funded by the Department of Family & Community Services under the S.A.A.P. program and supported by the N.S.W. Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre Inc., the Department of Family & Community Services or the N.S.W. Department of Health.

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.