

Press Kit



UND RUHIG FLIEßT DER RHEIN

EIN FILM VON
VOLKER KLOTZSCH UND OLIVER MATTHES

REGIE UND BUCH **VOLKER KLOTZSCH** UND **OLIVER MATTHES** BILDGESTALTUNG **VOLKER KLOTZSCH, JAN MAMMEY** TON **OLIVER MATTHES, JOHANNES DOBERENZ, EDDY FUGE, GHIATH AL MITHAWI** MONTAGE **VOLKER KLOTZSCH, OLIVER MATTHES, KATHARINA WITTMANN** MUSIK **ROBERT REHNIG** SOUNDDSIGN UND TONMISCHUNG **MICHAEL BOER** COLOR GRADING **OLIVER MATTHES, ROBERT WINTER** DRAMATURGIE **BEATRICE BABIN** PRODUZENTEN **VOLKER KLOTZSCH, OLIVER MATTHES** EINE PRODUKTION VON **ROOTFILMS**



UNDRUHIGFLIESSTDERHEIN



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GEFÖRDERT DURCH:



werkleitz

AND GENTLY FLOWS THE RHINE

documentary | 104min | 2021

screenings:

55. Internationalen Hofer Filmtage (October 2021)

production: Volker Klotzsch und Oliver Matthes

directing: Volker Klotzsch und Oliver Matthes

photography: Volker Klotzsch, Jan Mammey

sound: Oliver Matthes, Johannes Doberenz, Eddy Fuge, Ghiath Al Mithawi

dramaturge: Beatrice Babin

editing: Volker Klotzsch, Oliver Matthes, Katharina Wittmann

material assistance: Karen Lemme, Johannes Ramson

music: Robert Rehnig

sounddesign: Michael Boer (EchoLux)

colorgrading: Oliver Matthes, Robert Winter

graphics and title design: Matthias Ditscherlein

dcp-play: Robert Hölzel

subtitling: Elvira Möhring

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LOGLINE

Eight years of Caroline's childhood are gone. She simply can't remember. Everything is buried under trauma, induced by years of abuse. When she learns that her father is dying, suddenly everything breaks open. And her fight for survival begins.

SYNOPSIS

The last evening before her gender reassignment surgery: Caroline finally imagines herself on the side of happiness. As the hospital settles down for the night, she says goodbye to her old self and feels happy for the first time in her life.

Weeks later, her father is dying. Caroline looks paralyzed from a balcony parapet of her high-rise in Leipzig and talks about the first abuse on Christmas Eve in her childhood.

Very soon she realizes that without coming to terms with her trauma, she has no chance of building a future and arriving in the new gender. With the help of a therapist, Caroline goes back into her past - with an uncertain outcome.



DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Caroline is a fighter and heroine for us, who is going her way against all odds. We got to know Caroline five years ago. Already during the filming of the short film "Jetzt bin ich - Ich" and the research work during the gender reassignment surgery, an intense trust developed. At that time, we could not have known that we were witnessing a severe stroke of fate and a journey into the deepest abysses of the human soul.

Immediately after her gender reassignment surgery, Caroline received the message that her father was dying. Via Facebook. Being so close to happiness, finally reaching her goal, finally being a woman, abruptly interrupted the repressed childhood trauma of years of abuse by her father and other men. Extremely difficult months followed for her. Spontaneous flashbacks where some object, image or melody triggered a heavy remembrance in Caroline.

As filmmakers, we immediately asked ourselves if we should continue filming.

Caroline's reaction surprised us even more. She didn't want us to stop filming. She wanted to tell her story. She wants the film to mirror her process of coming to terms with her trauma. She wants the film to give other victims of sexualized violence faith in themselves and empower them. We also think that her struggle for survival must be

told. Statistics from victims' associations say that one to two children per school class are affected by sexualized violence.

Sometimes you read about it in the newspaper. But what it does to these children and how it destroys their lives disappears behind these lines. With this film, we want to give all these children a voice. Talks with other victims of abuse and associations of victims also motivated us to continue and to change the focus of the film.

In the meantime, Caroline sought professional help from the psychologist and trauma therapist Prof. Dr. Kurt Seikowski of the University of Leipzig, whom she had already met as an expert witness in the lead-up to her operation and with whom she has a relationship of trust. Caroline and her therapist encouraged us to film these therapy sessions as well. The camera acted in the background without disturbing the conversations or influencing the course of therapy.

And gently flows the Rhine has inevitably become a very intimate portrait. At the world premiere at the 55th International Hof Film Festival, the film was praised by the audience and the press: as an empathetic, touching and courageous film.



NOTES OF THE DRAMATURGE

What makes this debut film so special is the trust that the protagonist has placed in her directors. As viewers, we are right there in the time before and after the sex change. Reiner becomes Caroline. The story of the documentary begins with this external change.

But the main story of the film is Caroline's search for happiness. At first, happiness seems tangible with her new identity as a woman. But traumatic memories from her childhood haunt Caroline. To work through the trauma, Caroline goes into therapy.

The camera follows Caroline during her therapy sessions. These journeys into childhood will rhythmize and structure the film. The seemingly superficial transformation from man to woman takes on subliminal layers. Certainly not all of the injuries of abuse will be told in the film. The selective narrations of the therapy sessions pick out some events, others are touched upon or omitted. Through the montage of what is told and what is left out, a picture of Caroline's childhood emerges in the viewer's mind.

The different themes of the sessions, such as the father, the mother will intertwine with Caroline's everyday life. The camera observes Caroline in different situations. There is the reunion with Caroline's ex-wife, once they were a couple, now they seem like two old friends. The meeting at their home on the Rhine, at the foot of the Loreley, with "Reiner's" best buddy Axel, who finally dares to ask Caroline if she knew she was a woman back when Reiner was a man.

As dramatic as Caroline's life has been, it is a hopeful film. Because her search for happiness shows that it is a possibility.

If I wasn't involved in other films now, I would have loved to make the cut. But Volker and Oliver did a great job with the editing and managed to bring out the really atmospheric images and the profound story. The dramaturgical work on the film has moved me deeply and I sincerely hope that this film reaches and moves many people as well.

Beatrice Babin

About Beatrice

Beatrice is Editing lecturer at the German Film and Television Academy Berlin (DFFB) and member of the German Film Academy. She also is professor of editing at the University of Television and Film Munich.

STATEMENTS OF CIVIL PARTNERS



**Aktionsbündnis
gegen sexuelle Gewalt**

Tour41 e.V.

Steffi Lachmann, action alliance against sexual violence Tour41

The documentary "And gently Rhine flows the Rhine" takes a courageous and special look at life with the childhood trauma of abuse. The viewers are invited to accompany the protagonist Caroline on her journey at eye level. As observers, they gain important and valuable impressions. Small insights into a complex topic. Wonderfully empathetic and magnificently staged. We as a society are called upon to look, listen and learn to understand. Only if we are prepared to do so, we can better protect children and adequately support those affected. Help to set an example and bring the taboo topic of sexualized violence against children into the light by supporting this film project!



Jerome Braun, managing director German Child Protection Foundation Hänsel+Gretel

Any way, any medium, any film, like this film, that breaks taboos and makes the truth of sexual violence against children "visible" can make people look and hopefully act before something happens.



Jana Endruschat, Managing Director Filmfederation Sachsen

Rootfilms gently sketches the emotional journey of a man of a man who only in his second life manages to tackle what he was unable to do in his first life, what he was unable to do in his first life. A brave film about an even braver woman.

ABOUT ROOTFILMS



We, Volker Klotzsch and Oliver Matthes, are two filmmakers from Leipzig and founded our own film production company Rootfilms in 2018. In spring 2021 we finished our first documentary film together *And gently flows the Rhine*, which will premiere at the 55. Internationale Hofer Filmtage.

One of our goals is to strengthen portrait film. In this genre we see a great potential to thematize the togetherness on a small and large scale by means of very personal life stories. Personal stories that question the lived normality. We are interested in people who are apparently different; who some would call outsiders. We want to put these people - such as Caroline in the film *And gently flows the Rhine* (funded by the Kulturstiftung Sachsen and Werkleitz-Gesellschaft, 2021) - in the spotlight with the aim of getting people to critically examine their prejudices and also reflect on their own actions and thinking.

Currently, the post-production of Five Seasons, a prose short film, is underway. Other productions such as „What is good education?“ (AT, story development), „Copland“ (AT, story development) and „Waiting for decisions“ (AT, story development) are in realization. On behalf of the Foundation of Saxon Architects, a long documentary is currently being produced as part of the project „Architektur macht Schule“.