

Jules Hart
A Profile by Tony Seton

Not many people decide to reinvent themselves and few return to college as part of the process. Jules Hart is one who did. She was born in Los Angeles and raised in Sunnyvale. She attended Homestead High School, the alma mater of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. She started UCLA out of high school, but dropped out and went to work. She became a model, a successful one, and she traveled the world for shoots from Los Angeles to Milan, New York to Tokyo.

She stayed with the modeling for almost 20 years, thinking that it would lead to acting – a dream she’d had since she was eleven – but there was a problem. “I was so shy that I couldn’t audition. I was terrible at auditions. I’d get in there and I’d freeze up and I thought, maybe I wasn’t good enough.”

Modeling is an industry that has a low threshold when it comes to age. “Nobody wants a 30-year-old model and so you keep lying. I had my ninth annual 22nd birthday.” So at age 35, Jules went back to UCLA.

“I didn’t know what to do with my life but I realized that I needed to earn some money. The jobs that I was looking for paid like \$6.25 an hour, and I thought, ‘I can’t live on this, so I better get a career.’” She thought she wanted to be a therapist and particularly to work with women, but UCLA required that to follow that path she would have to become a psychiatrist. That wasn’t for her. She got some good advice from a professor who told her, “Just take what you love and let your heart, your soul find your way.”

Then Jules discovered that she loved learning people’s stories. It was anthropology, but on an individual basis rather than a whole society. “I ended up as a folklorist and that was under the umbrella of World Arts and Cultures. Folklore used to be its own major but it just became less and less popular, so by the time I graduated I think I was the last or one of the last two folklorists to graduate from UCLA.”

But if she went back to school for a career that would make more than minimum wage, she didn’t choose well. When she asked her professor what she might do with her degree, he told her, “This isn’t a trade school.” But Jules was committed, and she decided to produce a documentary.

“It’s called *Pink Smoke Over The Vatican* and it’s about the ordination of women as priests in the Roman Catholic Church. It really became a labor of love after a while. You meet remarkable people and you can’t let them down then. You’ve interviewed them and you want to get their story out.”

Among them was Father Roy Bourgeois. “He’s been excommunicated because of his stand for women’s ordination. He is also a Nobel Peace Prize nominee in 2010. How many people



do you meet like this in your life? I was in awe of him.”

She laughed. “After we finished the interview, he wanted to know when the film was going to be done and what I was going to do with it and I said, ‘Well, I don’t really know,’ and he said, ‘Jules, if I call you at midnight and I ask you how the film’s coming, I don’t want to hear, “I’m sleeping.”””

She finished the film and then went to the networks to place it but she had no luck. Indeed, there aren’t many routes for indy documentaries, as good and as important as they may be. “So, now I’m selling it as an out-of-the-trunk-of-my-car kind of thing. I have a website and it’s on Amazon.”

She has sold over 5,000 DVDs, which while impressive hasn’t generated enough revenues to even cover the costs. But Jules is picking up gigs locally that are putting food on the table. She’s done a video for Marion Gellatly’s Virtual Style School, and she’s working on a set of teaching DVDs for a craniosacral practitioner.

She also produced a documentary on at-risk youth for the Office of Employment Training in Salinas. She was leery that the young people wouldn’t trust her. “I figured there was no way I could tell these kids’ stories. I mean, look at me, I am the face of privilege, right? But I was able to break through to a few of them.”

The story was a good one. Some huge Alaskan yellow cedar logs had been donated for the kids to learn how to make totem poles. After 9-11 they created a pole which they donated to the city of New York as a healing pole. A number of PBS stations aired the story. “That was very gratifying.”

Jules lives with her terrier Isabel on a ridge in Carmel Valley.