



All Roads Lead to HBO's 'The Lady and the Dale'

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During the Middle East oil crisis of the mid-1970s, brash automotive entrepreneur Elizabeth Carmichael rose to fame as she promoted her fuel-efficient, three-wheel car known as The Dale that she promised got 70 miles to the gallon.

Now Mark and Jay Duplass are digging into her story in a four-episode docuseries for HBO titled *The Lady and the Dale*, premiering Sunday, Jan. 31 at 9 p.m. ET/PT.

While Carmichael was an accomplished con, she also was something else not usually seen in the spotlight in the '70s: transgender. Prior to working on the development and promotion of *The Dale*, Carmichael had lived a life of crime and was on the run from authorities. With several ex-wives and children in her wake, she eventually wedded Vivian Barrett with whom she had five children. They all lived on the run from the law for many years, while Carmichael started her transition from man to woman in 1966.

With her past now hidden and a new identity as a widow with a business degree, she founded the 20th Century Motor Car Company. Before the car could be introduced, she was arrested for fraud and business code violations.

The trial that followed was one of the longest in Los Angeles criminal court's history and became as much about Carmichael's transgender identity as it was about The Dale. Representing herself in the high-profile case, Carmichael challenged the prejudices of the time and the scrutiny into her life continued for decades after.

As the above spot reflects, the story is told using an inventive technique that marries archival material with photo collages and animation, combining audio recordings with interviews while framing Carmichael's story within a broader history of trans experiences.

The Lady and the Dale is directed by Nick Cammilleri and Zackary Drucker and executive produced by the Duplass brothers along with Mel Eslyn, Allen Bain, Andre Gaines, Cammilleri, Alana Carithers and Zackary Drucker. Madison Passarelli produces. For HBO, Tina Nguyen is senior producer with Nancy Abraham and Lisa Heller executive producing.

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