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Dolly Parton Impersonator Finds Herself in Seriously Red

By Winnie McCroy





There are a lot of love lessons in play with the February 10th release of the comedic drama *Seriously Red* by Gravitas Ventures & Lionsgate. The film is written by and stars Krew Boylan, a redheaded spitfire from down under who pursues her dream of becoming the world's greatest Dolly Parton impersonator—and ends up finding herself in the process.

The film—a love letter to Dolly Parton—follows Raylene Delaney, aka Red, a woman who just can't manage to fit into the life she's been born to. She's unfulfilled by her office job and garners guffaws when she arrives at a work party as Dolly Parton. Awarded the prize of Office Clown, she takes the stage, clicks her fingernails together and belts out "9 to 5" until her coworkers crowd the dancefloor.

But "the bland leading the bland" ends up being too much to bear, so Red livens up the party with her comic antics. When her boss fires her for inappropriate behavior, she quits that 9 to 5, accidentally trashing his office in the process.

Inspired by Parton's quote, "If you don't like the road you're walking, start paving another one," Red decides to follow her lifelong dream. An unemployed, single daughter is too much for her disapproving mother (Jean Kittson) to bear, so Red moves out of her mom's garage and shacks up with her platonic childhood friend Francis (Thomas Campbell) to get her act together.





Red heads to the Copy Club, a refuge for celebrity impersonators. Actress Rose Byrne (Boylan's real-life bestie) stars as Elvis, Copy Club emcee, her drag king persona serving to subvert cisgender sexuality and identity norms.

Red takes the stage to do a bit of banter with the gays in the crowd, and attracts the attention of local talent scout, Teeth (Celeste Barber). When Red wows as Dolly, Elvis takes note—and takes her home! (Byrne and Boylan said it wasn't too-too weird making out with their best friend.)

Byrne stepped into the project early as executive producer and managed to get the blessing of the actual Dolly Parton, whose licensing and music approval was integral to the plot. Hollywood insiders loved the script, but many pushed for Boylan to be replaced as the lead. Byrne and the Dollhouse Pictures team stood behind Boylan and her vision.



Her wig catches on fire but she makes it onstage just in time for their duet, “Islands in the Stream.”

And Byrne even enlisted the help of her husband, Bobby Cannavale, to play the role of Neil Diamond impersonator and agent Wilson. He initially tries to discourage Red, but then lets her try her hand singing “Applejack” at the Tamworth Country Musical Festival. She catches the eye of a Kenny Rogers (Daniel Webber) impersonator, who is looking for a new Dolly Parton to compliment the act.

Kenny loves her and she gets booked for five appearances in Hong Kong. Her wig catches on fire but she makes it onstage just in time for their duet, “Islands in the Stream.” They share another ‘duet’ in Kenny’s hotel room. Her and Kenny rock Pride festivals, photo shoots—and a few dressing-room tables, as well.

“Being a mimic is not enough... you cannot be halfway in,” says Kenny. So Red dives further down the rabbit hole, not only performing but living as Dolly Parton, shacking up with a full-time Kenny Rogers as her lover. She even goes through with breast enhancement surgery.


Seriously Red (Gravitas Ventures & Lionsgate | Official Trailer)



On the night of the big show, Red's mom and her friend Francis head to the Twin Palm Theatre. Dolly blows it out of the water with "Jolene," "Islands in the Stream," and "Body and Soul." Then Kenny pledges his love on bended knee and asks her to marry him. She can't be his pretend Dolly in real life, so she strips right down to the wig and back into Red, all in the name of saving herself. It's her 'come to Jesus' moment with her mom, and the crowd goes crazy.

Red lays it bare, to confront what lies beneath. The community of Copy Club has embraced her, but she needs to discover self-love, to "Find out who you are and do it on purpose," as Parton says.

In the end, Kenny goes off to charm Nashville, and Red stays in Australia doing her own thing—singing to schoolkids about her book, *Seriously Red: Stories by Raylene Delaney*.

Kudos to Costume Designer Tim Chappel and Makeup and Hair Designer Cassie Hanlon for creating the wardrobe and looks for Dolly and the rest of the drag artists in the film, as "It's hard to be a diamond in a rhinestone world." They help make this film shine. 

Seriously Red is out on Lionsgate on February 10. To watch the film, visit [Vudu](#)



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