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BBC HIT BY NEW BASHIR SHAME

Outrage as MoS reveals derisory efforts to find murdered girl's clothes after reporter took them from mother – then LOST them

The BBC has been plunged into a fresh crisis over the activities of disgraced reporter Martin Bashir.

MPs last night demanded an inquiry after a Mail on Sunday investigation discovered that the Corporation failed to properly search for a murdered schoolgirl's bloodied

By **Mark Hookham** and **Eileen Fairweather**

clothes that Bashir had lost. The rogue journalist – who infamously tricked Princess Diana into the interview that made his name – obtained the clothing from the

grieving mother of nine-year-old Babes In The Wood murder victim Karen Hadaway.

The loss of the garments was discovered when she asked for them back to help police undertake a crucial review of evidence in a bid to

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DAVID VINNI

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Julia Bradbury: I've got breast cancer – and I'll fight it with all I've got

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BRAVE FACE: Julia at the TV awards in the outfit that said 'goodbye to the body I've been living in'

WHEN TV star Julia Bradbury walked the red carpet at the National Television Awards earlier this month, she chose a silver off-the-shoulder jumpsuit cut dramatically across her chest. It was a heartbreaking, valedictory act - 'a kind of goodbye to the body I've been living in all these years'.

For the mother of three and primetime presenter of *Countryfile*, *Watchdog* and Britain's Best Walks, today reveals that she has breast cancer and will face a mastectomy next month. 'It changes your world forever in an instant,' says Julia, 51. 'There is no preparing you for those words. You hear "cancer" and your brain starts to explode.'

'The cruel thing about human beings is that we are the only creatures on the planet who know we are going to die. We all live in hope of a peaceful end in our beds, having had children and grandchildren, or having fulfilled whatever mission in life we choose. But the word cancer is so ugly it makes you think of the most unimaginably horrible death. That's the reality of it.'

'It is arbitrary and unfair. I have to hope I have caught mine early enough. A mastectomy is a shattering thing to go through but it means that I am going to live and be here for my children.'

'Cancer has so many points, the diagnosis seems like everything, but it isn't. It puts you on a pathway and you have to navigate that while holding back your emotions so you are not overwhelmed all the time. Right now I'm simply focused on having surgery because I don't know how I am going to be, if I will have more cancer to deal with, how I will cope with recovery, how life will feel afterwards.'

On the day we spend together, Julia gives a bravura performance punctuated by tears and mugs of green tea, since she is avoiding coffee and cocoa. 'It's easy to decline when you look at something and think 'my cancer could feed off that,' she says, unconsciously touching her chest.

She looks her usual, athletically glamorous self and it is hard to reconcile a woman whose personal brand is so rooted in outdoorsy wellness and exercise with such serious illness. Yet early in October she will have her left breast with its six centimetre tumour removed. Surgeons will also take tissue from her lymph nodes to establish whether or not the disease has spread.

Even as she comes to terms with this deeply personal diagnosis, it's clear her experience will impact on other women. She is proof they must be hyper-vigilant in regards to their breasts and face up to their fears if they see signs of change. And it is clear too, that all the dynamism and positive energy Julia pours into her environmental cam-

paigning will now also be unleashed in Britain's breast cancer fight.

It's not an ambassadorial role any woman would seek, but she hopes that by speaking candidly about what is happening to her, she may

save a stranger's life. 'My plan,' she says, 'is to come through it and out the other side and I hope to be able to do that bravely enough so that women who are scared to get tested, to get a diagnosis, go ahead.'

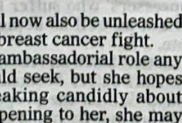
'You hear the word 'cancer' and your brain starts to explode. It changes your world in an instant'



INTERVIEW

by **SARAH OLIVER**

Photoshoot by **David Venni**



Revealing her devastating breast cancer diagnosis, TV presenter Julia Bradbury, 51, hopes sharing her story will help other women...

My daughter asked 'Mummy, can I still hug you?' I said 'Yes darling, I need your hugs now more than ever'

August. Her follow-up with the consultant was scheduled for this month. She almost didn't go, as the July scan, which included an ultrasound and a physical examination, had given no cause for alarm. It was her big sister Gina who insisted she kept the appointment.

'I was with the consultant and we were having a nice chat about life and holidays and then I hopped on the table and he did another ultrasound and suddenly he paused and looked at the screen and made a noise.'

What kind of noise? 'He exhaled. And I knew. He said, "I am not happy with that, there is a tiny shadow, can you see it?"'

She could. A tiny dark pinpoint in her breast. Yet she could not compute that it might be cancer. Julia knows the disease is the great equaliser, that no one is immune, but her rational, reasonable self

I want to be able to give them a wave and say "Look, it's horrible, but you can do it too."

Back in July, 'book a mammogram' was just one of many entries on her to-do list. Julia was on an annual recall having found a breast lump which proved to be a cluster of benign micro-cysts last year.

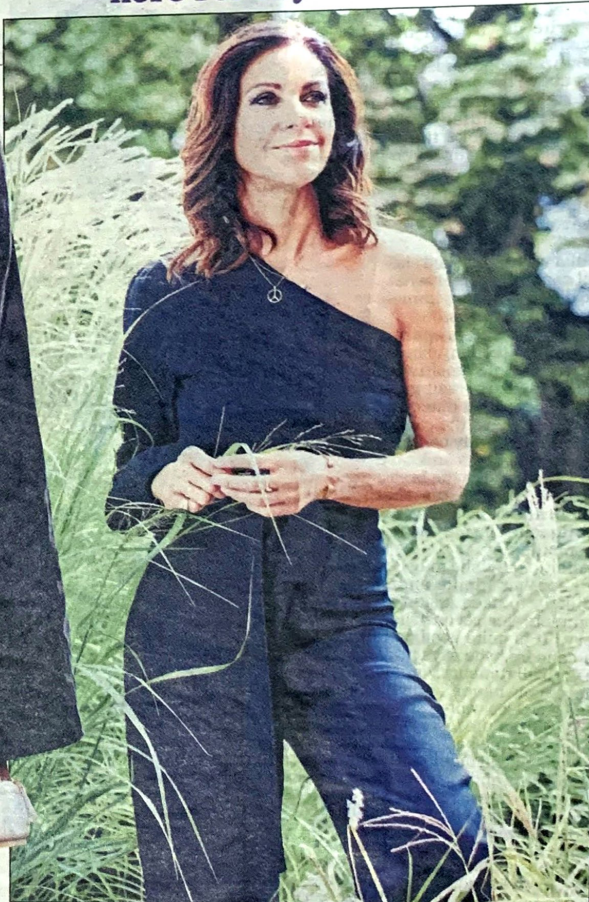
She secured an appointment before she went on holiday with her partner Gerard, and their three children, son Zeph, ten, and twin daughters Zena and Xanthe, six, in



DAVID JENNI / WIREIMAGE



A mastectomy is a shattering thing to go through but it means that I am going to be here for my children.



WE'VE GOT YOU: Julia with children Zeph, ten, and twins Zena and Xanthe, six, on the day last week she told them of her diagnosis. Above and next page: Defiant Julia in an exclusive MoS photoshoot

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knew she'd only just been screened and examined and everything had appeared fine. Within minutes she was marching the three blocks back to the mammogram unit where she also climbed the stairs instead of taking the lift. 'Because that's me, isn't it?' she half-cries, half-laugh. And then she starts to cry properly as she remembers the speed with which her safe and happy life was wrenched from her. 'Suddenly I was lying down on my side with my back braced against a pillow having a machine like a hole punch taking lumps out of my breast.'

It was the first of what would be many biopsies and her instinctive response was an almost animal urge to see her children. 'They were all I could think about. I lay there longing for them, thinking, "No. No. Just no."'

She waited for the results over one agonisingly long weekend. She recalls having a shower and looking in the mirror. 'I was holding my breasts and thinking I like my boobs. I don't want anything to happen to them. I thought my odds were 50/50. I felt I was fit and healthy, I hoped my body was standing up to life. Then the statistics start flying around your head, one in eight women get breast cancer, the danger zone is between 50 and 75, you can't help thinking that, it's only human.'

Gina and Gerard knew of her biopsy – con-

'What would have happened if I'd failed to tick Book a Mammogram off my to do list that day?'

What happened to Sarah Harding is not some sort of lesson, it is a tragedy

ducted early thanks to private healthcare – but she told no one else. 'I'm the kind of person who deals with stuff internally. I wanted to wait it out and process the information before sharing it.'

She decided the call from her consultant telling her the result would be best taken in her own home.

'I knew it was going to be the most significant call of my life and I wanted to be on my own, I wanted to write down what he told me. Around that date I was filming in a beautiful woodland, in a harness, 70ft above the ground. That wasn't the right environment. And I am glad I scheduled it for home, because he spoke the words no one wants to hear, ever. "High grade. Sizeable tumour. Six centimetres [just over 2in]. Could be trouble to treat in terms of the area."'

Julia was so shocked she still can't remember what she did in the hours immediately afterwards.

Today, as she prepares for her mastectomy, she is clinging to the 'positives' which she trusts will give her a successful outcome. Doctors believe the cancer cells are currently confined to her milk ducts and have not yet spread to the breast tissue. This means that, despite the significant size of the tumour, she may not need chemotherapy.

Additionally, she may be able to keep her nipple and she is unlikely to need a skin graft to complete her reconstructive surgery. 'It is quite good on the scale on cancers,' she says bravely. 'But as with all tumours, until you are in there you never know.' She will face a week's wait post-surgery for the result of the tests on her lymph nodes to come back, another phone call which will dictate the course of the months and years to come.

Her life these last three weeks has already been a blur of medical procedures, more biopsies, an MRI scan, having little titanium balls inserted in her breast to mark the tumour field and learning about the silicone implant which will be used to rebuild her chest. She is doing



RESILIENT: Julia says she is in no mood to 'wallow' after her diagnosis

exercises to strengthen the muscles in her chest wall and is about to see a specialist mastectomy counsellor to help her come to terms psychologically with the procedure.

'Ultimately, if a mastectomy helps you repair then it is a good thing. But it does feel like losing a part of you, part of your sexual identity and part of your experience of motherhood. I breast-fed my babies from that boob and when I look down I picture my twins and Zeph before them on it. That hurts.'

Tougher even than dealing with the prospect of surgery, has been sharing her news with her family, close friends and colleagues. It says a lot about her pragmatism and lack of self pity that she found their pain found harder to bear than her own.

Gerard told her: 'I can't know what it's like to lose a breast but everything else is covered. We've got this – you just get better.'

She let Zeph, Xanthe and Zena settle in to their first week back at school before telling them while walking around the garden. Astutely, she used the 'living example' of her own parents, their grandparents, both of whom have survived cancer, as a promise she would be just fine, too. Her mother has had colon cancer, her father prostate cancer, neither of which has a link to breast cancer.

'They were OK,' she says of her children's reaction to the news. 'I have told them to ask whatever they want, whenever they want but it's hard to calibrate – how honest can you be with children without scaring them?' Xanthe asked, 'Mummy can I still hug you?' 'I said "Yes darling, I need your hugs more than ever."'

Sister Gina has been her rock and drove her up to the family home in Rutland to break the news to their mum Chrissi and dad Michael. 'My mum just said, "No Julia, no, you're

joking, please..." That memory of having to inflict such hurt on her 84-year-old mother makes Julia start to cry again.

That said, she is absolutely refusing to 'wallow' – her word. 'I still need to be a mum to my kids, a partner and a working woman,' she says. 'I'm still Julia.'

It's why, despite her diagnosis, she didn't bin her ticket to the National Television Awards earlier this month.

It's one of her industry's top nights out and it was when she wore that stunning silver jumpsuit.

'I was in a box with friends like Ben Shephard and Cherry Healey. Kate Garraway won the best documentary award for her programme about her husband Derek Draper's battle with long Covid. It prompted a deep conversation about life-

The consultant did another ultrasound and suddenly he paused, looked at the screen and made a noise. And I knew...

changing moments and how everybody was struggling with something,' she says. 'It was difficult to participate. I hadn't told them yet so I had to step away. I slipped to the bar to get another glass of water with lime cut in to look like it was a vodka tonic.'

'Normally I would be swinging from the rafters at the NTAs, I'd be the last woman standing, but I was home by 10pm, not even drinking a

hot chocolate,' she says ruefully. She has already overhauled her diet, cutting out what little red meat she ate, sugar and alcohol. Despite her slim 5ft 9in frame Julia is a legendary scoffer of cakes, pudding and pastries. 'In terms of how I live, from now on everything is going to change. Friday night drinks will never be the same again. 'I have always been all about balance and moderation but sometimes yes, I will eat the rest of the cake or not put the cork back in the bottle and that's not going to be me



How to check your breasts – and what to look out for

By Liz O'Riordan

BREAST SURGEON AND
BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR

THE most obvious sign can be a lump, either in the breast or high up in the armpit. It might be visible, or only obvious when you feel it. But other signs include dimpling of the skin on the breast, an inverted nipple or bleeding from the nipple. A red rash can also be an indication of an underlying problem.

HOW TO CHECK The best time is during your period when the balance of hormones means the tissue will naturally be less lumpy and sore. If you're post-menopausal, any time is fine, although most women find that checking on the first of the month is a good way to remember.

● Stand topless in front of a mirror and check your breasts face on, and then from each side. If your breasts are large, lift them up and check the skin underneath.

● Lift your hands above your

head and look again – do they look any different?

● Put your hands on your hips and tense your chest muscles and check again.

● Lie down to feel your breasts and, using the flat surface of your fingers, push down on the breast tissue. Feel your whole breast, in a circular motion from your cleavage to your armpit.

● Also check in the armpit itself, pushing the skin and fat against your ribcage.

● If you find a lump anywhere, check the opposite breast or armpit – chances are it will feel the same.

● If you're concerned about something you've found, check again in two weeks. If it's still there, get it checked out by a doctor.

Will I only be taking sofa jobs after this? If I was a betting woman, I wouldn't put money on that!

misplaced sense of guilt while understanding that it's a natural response to such random bad luck.

Her cancer is not lifestyle-related, and nor is it genetic, although she will have herself tested for the BRCA gene which leads to a higher incidence of breast cancer in some women, such as Angelina Jolie who had a preventative double mastectomy.

Julia's breast cancer is more about her age, her gender and cruel chance. Those who know her recognise that when she is well again, this will drive her advocacy on behalf of other women.

And it won't stop her, she promises, embarking on the walks, climbs and overseas expeditions she has been bringing to British screens since she started her career reporting from Hollywood for GMTV back in the 1990s.

Since then Julia has built a TV career out of her love of walking and the natural environment, making multiple series and documentaries designed to get Britain lacing up its boots. She was one of the first stars to make camping and caravanning sexy and she's always been a champion of environmental causes and conservation.

Earlier last week she was filming in Sherwood Forest and came home soaked to the skin with a tick embedded in her upper arm.

So she is finding great solace and resilience in continuing to do the work she finds so fulfilling.

'Will I only be taking sofa jobs after this? If I was a betting woman,

I wouldn't put money on that,' she says. And she has met at least some of this catastrophe in her life with comedy, making friends laugh with her stories of listening to Ibiza club anthems to take her mind off the deafening clanging of her MRI scan and promising not to emerge from reconstructive surgery with a huge chest.

'I won't be taking the opportunity to upgrade, to do a Dolly Parton,' she says.

She also told her surgeon how many of her family and friends had offered their body fat for her new breast, after hearing she didn't have enough of her own and would have to have a silicone implant instead. The medic sighed and said: 'It doesn't work like that, I am afraid.'

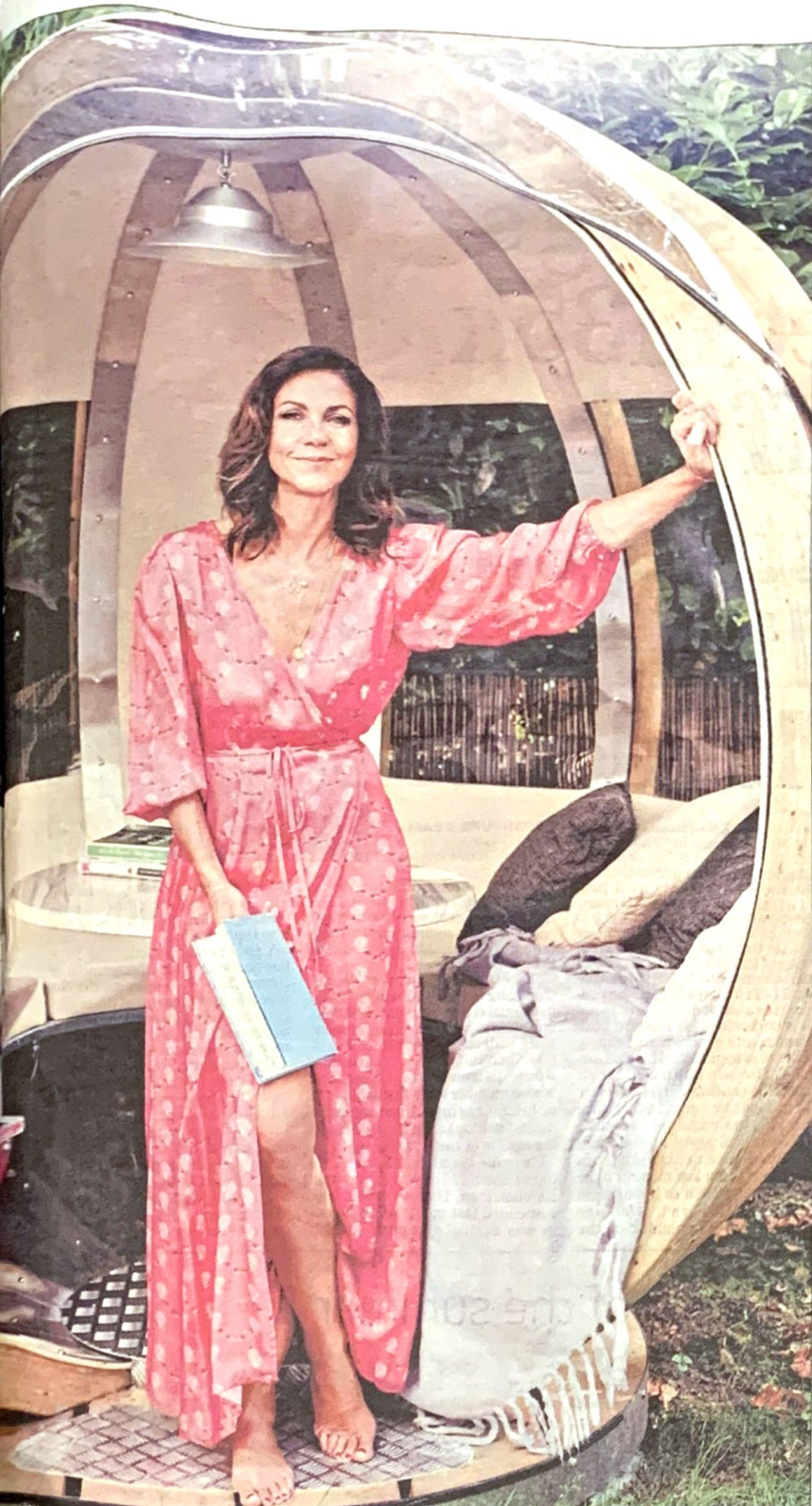
But it would be wrong to diminish the brutality of her diagnosis nor the threat it poses. Julia wept when she learned of the death of singer Sarah Harding aged just 39 of breast cancer earlier this month. 'I cried so hard because she found a lump and did not do anything. What happened to her is not some sort of lesson, it is a tragedy.'

It's something she wants other women to avoid at all costs. 'We must, must, must check ourselves and seek help. Being scared of a diagnosis could be the thing which kills you. So learn what to look for and check, check, check. Doctors are experts but only you can press a lump, know how it feels and think you should do something about it.'

'What would have happened if I hadn't ticked 'book a mammogram' off my to-do list that day? What if I hadn't gone to the appointment I thought I should cancel? Would I be in the next stage, with an invasive cancer? I don't know.'

'As it is I am going to lose my breast. I trust that one day I will look down on it and think that was the fight of my life and I have the ultimate battle scar to prove it.'

● Donations have been made in lieu of a fee for this article to Breast Cancer Now (breastcancer.org) and the Pink Ribbon Foundation (pinkribbonfoundation.org.uk)



for a long time, until I have done my research and made sure I'm in top physical condition for the surgery and recovery.'

Like many people who are newly diagnosed, Julia has questioned whether she was in any way culpa-

ble. 'There are factors at play that you have no control over, the menopause being one. I'm healthy now but I didn't always look after myself this well.'

'And we are all exposed every day to toxins – fire retardants, tyres,

pollution, pesticides. I was asking have I done something here? If I had begun taking really good care of myself earlier instead of ten or 12 years ago when I was starting a family, would this be happening to me now?' It's hard to listen to her

We must, must, must check ourselves and seek help. Being scared of a diagnosis could be the thing which kills you.