

# The Little Girl Who Stole The Offshore Boat Racer's Heart



Every now and then we come across a story that is known to a few but is so touching that it needs to be retold to many because it is just too good not to be shared. The following is one of those stories...

The story involves offshore powerboat racer Jimmy Winters who is the owner / driver of the Supercat 38' Skater "Talk'n Trash." Jimmy has been racing for the last few years with long time NJPPC member Vinny Rifice. The name "Talk'n Trash" has a few meanings as I see it. Jimmy and Vinny like to have fun and part of that fun is "smack talk" or also known as "trash talk" as they travel the OPA racing circuit. The other root of the team name is that Jimmy owned and recently sold a very successful trash business on Long Island. Thus the name "Talk'n Trash" was born. Even on the side of the boat the team mascot is "Oscar The Grouch" of Sesame Street fame who is popping his head out of a garbage can.

So back in 2008, the cutest little offshore racing fan Julia, who was 9 years old at the time, went to Cambridge MD with her family to cheer on her Uncle Jimmy's boat – "Boat 444 Steady Pumping" – and to help the CBPBA (Chesapeake Bay Power Boat Association). As Julia was walking around the pits, she came across Jimmy's boat "Talk'n Trash" and fell in love with it instantly! On race day morning, while Julia was having breakfast, Jimmy happened to come walking into the room with his race shirt on. Julia jumped up and asked him if they sold any shirts? Jimmy said let me see what I can do? A few minutes later, he returned with a pink tank top in his hand for Julia. She tried to pay for it but Jimmy said "absolutely not!" From that moment on she became a 110% true Talk'n Trash fan.

Later that day Julia and her family cheered the Talk'n Trash team from the top deck of an anchored spectator boat. At the Awards Ceremony that night she went up to Jimmy to tell him he did one awesome job! Jimmy made her day by talking to her and asking her if she cheered for him?

In May of the following year, Julia and her family traveled to Ocean City, Maryland to watch the OPA offshore race. Julia made sure that she wore the same pink tank top that Jimmy had given to her. Once again she and her family were cheering team "Talk'n Trash" on from the beach! Unfortunately in that race, Talk'n Trash rolled over right in front of where they were. Julia was so upset that the family had to take her to the Pits to see if Jimmy and Vinny were ok? With tears in her eyes, she asked her mom to get Jimmy's address so she could make him a Get Well card. True to her word, she made a beautiful card and mailed it to him.

A short time after mailing the Get Well card, Julia was walking out to go to school she saw a package addressed to her sitting on our door step. Inside was a two page letter Jimmy wrote to her and included a ton of pictures, posters, tee shirts, a bag, his own race team hat and even his ID tag!



This year at the 2010 OPA Solomons Island MD race, Julia waited at the door of the hotel to greet Jimmy when he arrived. The minute he saw her, he walked over and gave her a big hug. Julia reached into her pocket and pulled out a guardian angel pendant to keep with him while racing to ensure that he would be safe. Jimmy told her if he won first place he was going to give the trophy to her. Needless to say she had the look of "Wow" in her eyes and she told everyone who would listen!

Julia cheered Jimmy on sure enough, Talk'n Trash took 1<sup>st</sup> Place! So at the awards Mike Yowaiski asked Julia to come up and accept Talk'n Trash's 1<sup>st</sup> place award. He also told everyone about her love for Jimmy and the whole team as well as all of the team stuff he sent her. Unfortunately it was at this boat race that Julia's grandfather (Poppie) became ill and was sent to the hospital.

Overall, this year has been a difficult one with her grandfather becoming ill. Her grandparents wanted to make sure this Christmas was one that she would never forget. So they wrote to Jimmy via Facebook to ask if he would fly in to spend a weekend in December with her. Without even thinking twice about it, he said he would love to.

Julia's MomMom and Poppie planned a pretty awesome surprise for the December weekend. They planned for the whole family to go to the Gaylord Hotel in Washington, DC to see the Dr. Seuss themed "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" ice show. Unfortunately, Julia's Poppie was not in the best of health and instead, she was at the hospital spending time with him.

Julia had no clue what had been originally planned for the weekend. As Julia was laying down and watching TV in the hospital waiting area, Jimmy and his fiancé' Catherine walked up behind her. As Julia was watching TV, Jimmy leaned over and said "what's up buddy? I came to visit you and to see how your Poppie is doing?"

She looked at him in total shock, but soon recovered enough to sit and talk to him and give him an Oscar The Grouch hat that she had already bought for him. (She was going to mail it to him but Julia's mom secretly brought it to the hospital as she knew they would be seeing him). In return, Jimmy presented Julia with an official Talk'n Trash Team shirt with her name embroidered on it.

Jimmy then went in to see how Julia's Poppie was doing? He told Jimmy how much it meant to him that Jimmy did this for his granddaughter. He also told Jimmy that he would make sure Julia made it to the Orange Beach offshore race in 2011. Jimmy told Julia's Poppie that he had to make sure he would be recovered in time for that race so he could take him for a ride in Talk'n Trash let him drive it. Jimmy also promised he wouldn't scare him too much!

Julia and her family, joined by Jimmy and Catherine, left the hospital and when to D.C. for the day and night. Jimmy made sure the whole time was all about Julia, from taking lots of pictures and even buying her flowers. They even both wore their matching Oscar the Grouch hats the whole time. Jimmy even invited Julia to visit him anytime at his home in New York or his vacation home in Vermont. Jimmy made her feel so special that the memories that were made will last forever.

*Julia's family feels that they are truly blessed to have Jimmy as a friend and they greatly appreciate all that he has done for Julia. Julia keeps in touch with Jimmy via Facebook, email and text messages. When Julia is not able to attend a race, she and her Poppie listen via the live play by play feed on the internet.*

- Written by Dave Patnaude & Julia's mom Janice

