

Beautiful model Tula tells her own amazing story

■ SHE is a sexy Page Three girl. She is also the beautiful model who skis behind the Loch Ness monster in the Smirnoff advert.

Her stunning 37-25-37 figure has won her a place in film history as one of the more memorable James Bond girls.

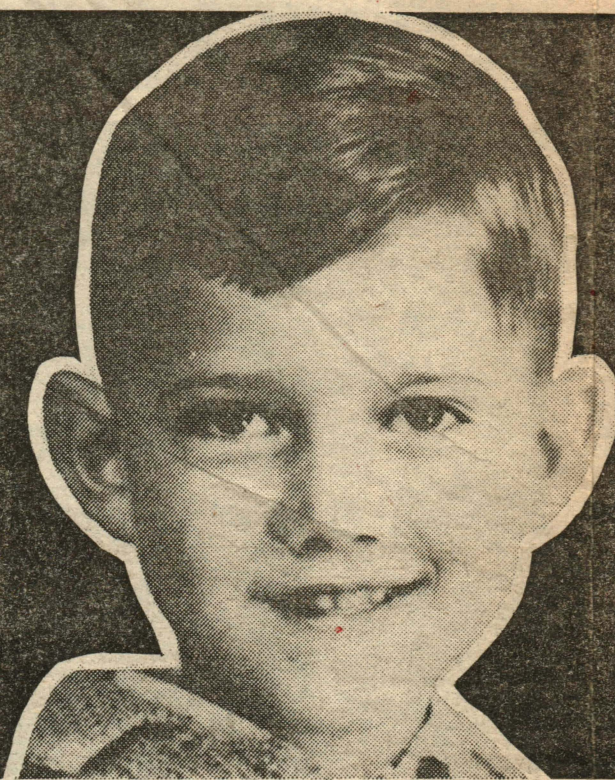
■ Yet Tula's most vital statistic is revealed only on her birth certificate. Twenty-seven years ago she was born Barry Cossey . . . A BOY.

Legally, Tula is still a man. But she refuses to hide away or to give up her place at the top of the modelling world—the most feminine profession of all.

■ For today Tula is a woman. A very desirable woman, who looks, acts and feels like a woman.

How long and difficult a journey it was to womanhood has always remained a secret.

Now—only in The Sun—Tula tells her own amazing and moving story.



I WAS BORN A BOY



I SHOULD have had such a happy childhood. After all, I came from a close and normal family.

My dad—a bus company coachbuilder — was always the boss.

My mum was soft, beautiful and very loving.

My older brother Terry was good at sport and my younger sister Pam was a real little girl. Then there was me.

At nine I was already secretly dressing up in Mum's clothing and begging Pam to let me play dolls with her.

I already knew I would like to be a girl.

I was weak and feeble. No wonder I

ADAPTATION BY
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was teased by my schoolmates. The other boys always called me "cissy Cossey."

I used to steal money from Mum to bribe the bullies to leave me alone.

Many days I would deliberately miss the school bus and sneak home while Mum was at work.

I would then spend the day trying on her clothes.

I know Dad was worried about me because he used to get Terry to try to toughen me up by taking me into the garden and teaching me how to fight.

But it didn't work. Inside, I was longing more and more to be a girl.

I used to fill the top pocket of my school blazer with pens, pencils and erasers to make it look as though I had breasts.

I also grew my hair long and started putting mascara on my lashes and eyebrows.

When I left school I went to work at a butcher's shop.

Dad was thrilled and thought it would make a man of me.

Necking

My schoolmates just laughed at the thought of "cissy Cossey" cutting up the meat.

They were right. I didn't last there long and soon moved on to work in a boutique, which was much more my sort of thing.

Outside work, I tried a few fumbling attempts at taking out girls and necking with them. But it didn't work.

I wanted to be a girl—not make love to them.

I wanted to dress and act as a girl.

Eventually I realised I could never do that in my little Norfolk village—so I moved to London.

There I grew more confident in passing myself off as a girl.

I spent all my money on clothes and even bought my first pair of high heels. They were a great success.

I also started calling

'When I reached the age of 21 I truly came of age—as a woman'



Ad girl going places



Showgirl with a secret

SUN EXCLUSIVE

myself Caroline Cossey and taking hormone tablets.

It was my Harley Street doctor who first mentioned the possibility of my having a sex change.

From that moment on I was determined to save up enough money to become a woman.

Amazingly, I auditioned and won a place in a nightclub as a showgirl.

I was terrified that the other singers and dancers would discover my secret. But no one even suspected that I was not the glamorous showgirl I was pretending to be.

Meanwhile, I was still making an effort to dress and behave normally whenever I went home.

But I felt the time had come when my family should know the truth.

I waited until my brother Terry came up to London to visit me.

He was shocked but he did admit that I really looked like a girl.

He said he would break the news to the rest of the family for me.

Understandably, my dad hit the roof.

He phoned me in a rage and, although I tried to explain my feelings, all he said before slamming down the phone was: "Pull yourself together. Get your hair cut and put a suit on!"

Looking back, I understand now that any father would have felt the same. But for a time I cut myself off from them all.

I was still saving hard for the sex-change operation but decided first to have breast implants.

Surprise

I startled the Harley Street surgeon—who was more used to dealing with middle-aged women than with young men—but the operation was a success.

I was delighted. And although I was still out of touch with my family, my sister Pam made a surprise visit.

She was speechless when we met—my breasts were bigger than hers!

She asked me to visit mum and dad.

She said: "I think dad

imagines you in a wig, false eyelashes and a sequinned dress. Go and show him he's wrong."

I decided to go home without warning them. When I arrived they were in bed. I let myself in and dad shouted downstairs: "Who's that?"

I had to think hard to remember my real name. "It's Barry", I said.

Dad came downstairs, grabbed me by the arms and just stared at me.

Mum asked me if I was hungry and made me a cup of tea. We hugged and kissed and talked and talked.

Finally, dad admitted: "You look a lovely feminine girl. It's not what I expected."

After that there was just one problem—the neighbours and the rest of the family.

I had to visit my home by night and when friends came round I had to scuttle upstairs.

I hated that. I was glamorous and successful in London but at home I was something to be

ashamed of. Then and there I decided nothing would stop me having the operation.

My dad offered to pay for the operation with his savings but I would not take his money.

I worked even harder, until I had the £2,000 saved.

The date for the biggest experience of my life was finally set for New Year's Eve, 1975.

I was 21 and about to truly come of age — as a woman.

When it was over the doctor seemed very pleased with the results of the operation.

Marry

My other big sorrow is that I'll never have children.

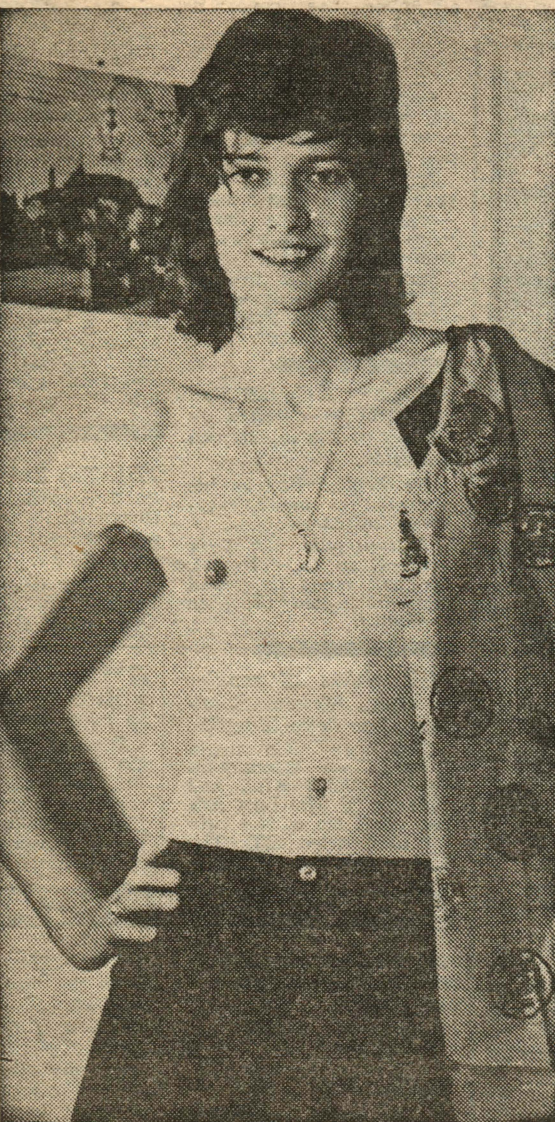
My brother Terry and his wife are expecting a baby very soon, and I'm excited about it.

It is no good feeling regret about babies, though. I've achieved so much more than I ever dreamed possible all those years ago when I was a boy.

I still wake up having nightmares that I have to go back to school, as a boy, and be called all those names again.

So I'm really glad to have made it this far.

I am, after all, a woman.



As a boy, Barry set out to look feminine

© 1982, Tula: I Am A Woman. Published by Sphere Books and Rainbird, price £2.95.

Model Tula made her name as a Page Three girl.