

Working in a testosterone-fuelled car showroom, Paul Mitchell was teased by colleagues about his long hair. But now Paul is a glamorous woman called Alexis, and she's out to shake up the UK's motoring industry as Britain's first transgender salesperson...

I opened my eyes nervously, looking in the mirror. And as tears rolled down my cheeks I said to myself, 'This is you - this is the beautiful woman with soft cheeks and full lips you've always wanted to be'.

You see, I'd just had a £4,000 non-surgical facelift at a top Manchester beauty clinic called SkinViva.

They injected my skin with a mixture of Botox and dermal filler, re-shaping my nose, eyebrows, cheeks, lips and chin.

It was the next step on my transition to become the person I always knew I really was deep down inside.

And having a womanly face for the first time ever has given me the confidence I need to start my life all over again.

EMBRACED

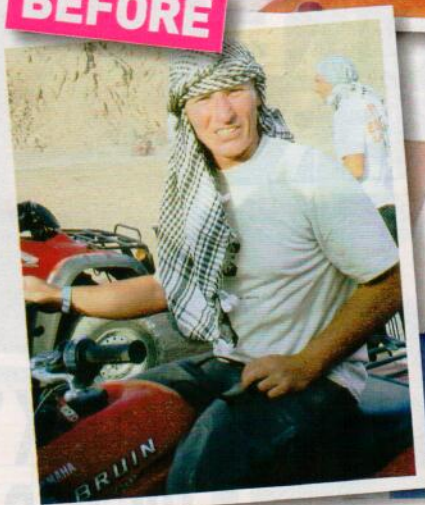
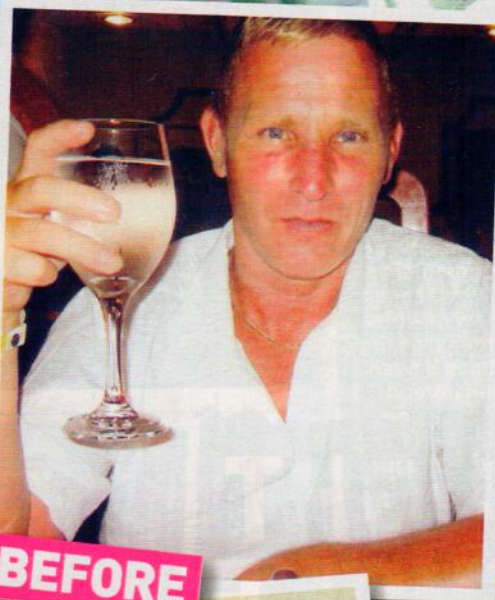
I was born Paul Mitchell, and grew up in Stalybridge, Greater Manchester - not exactly the sort of place where people like me were embraced back in the day.

When I was younger, being transgender was a real taboo. You can have plenty of issues and problems nowadays, but back then you simply couldn't show your true self.

I used to play truant from school when I was around 10 years old and walk the streets in my mum's clothes. She always knew I was effeminate, and I think she had an idea of what was going on when I kept stealing her black eyeliner and wig!

When I wore her clothes it just felt right. It's hard to describe because you just don't understand what's happening to you at that age, you simply know you're different.

Eventually, I started working in the motor trade. I used to buy and sell cars



at auction under the trading name E.C.C, working out of a lock-up in my home town.

And as you can imagine, the motor industry is quite male-dominated and full of machismo and bravado.

Being a trans person in that sort of environment is a bit of a no-no, and I never revealed my secret life to anyone.

Working with loads of lads, I never felt like I was able to, and when I began to transition into a woman I actually quit.

I think some people I worked with suspected what was going on. They used to

take the Mickey out of my long hair.

Now that I'm almost fully transitioned, I can't wait to get back to work because I genuinely love my job.

And I'm hoping that I will be a success in the motor industry once more, as I'd like to be one of the few trans women actively working in that environment.

Yes, I ran a mobile disco, and I'd go quad-biking through the dunes of Dubai like all my other blokey friends. But I was still different. I even got married to my loving wife Toni, who

sadly passed away from cancer four years ago, and she was always fully supportive of my feminine alter-ego.

Toni was the love of my life. I met her when she was 28 in a local pub. She became my soulmate, girlfriend and wife all rolled into one.

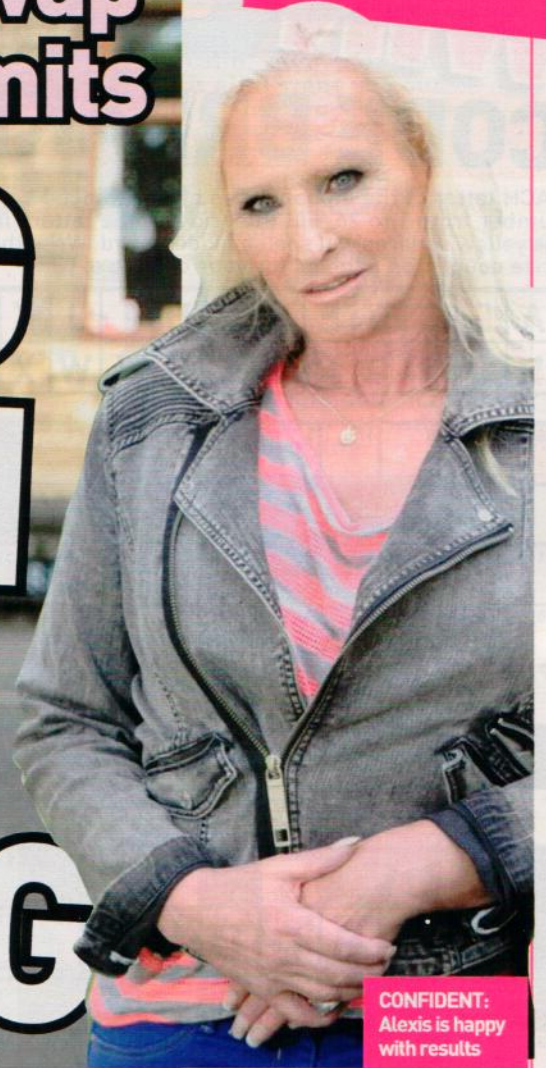
SEXUAL

From the first day Toni always knew about the real me - about Alexis - and she loved it. It was never a sexual thing; it never is with trans people. We would simply go out and about as



Britain's first sex-swap car saleswoman admits

BEING A MAN WAS DRIVING ME CRAZY!



CONFIDENT: Alexis is happy with results

gender, they don't understand the difference. In your world I'm straight because I fancy women but in my world I'm a lesbian.

IMPORTANT

That's why I won't go all the way in terms of gender operations medically, because I'm not attracted to other men.

It's a very dangerous operation and, to be honest, it's not important to me. It's more important for me to be able to live how I want.

Alexis Van Lee, 58, a former car salesperson from Stalybridge, Gtr Manchester

AS TOLD TO FIONA REANEY

Toni and Alexis.

So it's fair to say her death hit me hard. In many ways I'm making this transition now for her, because I want her to see me happy, as she looks down on me from above.

I'm currently taking hormones, shipped-in from Canada, to grow my breasts. And while it's expensive at £75 a time it's totally worth it. I can already feel my body becoming more rounded and womanly.

And I'm determined to work full-time again once I've fully transitioned.

The last step is electrolysis on my face to remove the facial hair.

I'm not going to worry about labels. To me, it's not clothing that makes you

a man or a woman. I'm a woman on the inside and what you see on the outside is just an external wrapper.

Also, many people get sexuality confused with

DR TIM PEARCE OF SKINVIVA SAYS...

'Alexis wanted to look different, but I still tried to carry out a holistic approach to ensure the finished result looked natural. I made lots of small changes to feminise and rejuvenate her face. I created a small lift to the tip of the nose as female noses tend to have a slight lift. I feminised her eyes by lifting the eyebrow, erasing the crow's feet and creating a more almond shape.

'I also used filler to create a rounder, fuller, higher cheek and also helped reduce her nose-to-mouth lines. Then some filler in the lips and chin area, which has helped to feminise, balance out the features and improve her side profile. It was a privilege to work with Alexis and a pleasure to be able to help and be a part of her transition.'