

GARY STRETCH -

The Punch Perfect Model

GARY STRETCH is a part time male model with a difference...



turned down the best purse of his career for a rematch. He claims also never to have taken a count since he first put on a pair of gloves.

Gary was born in St Helens, and although he has lived in London for the past four years, still has a heavy Lancashire accent. He took up boxing at the age of ten and admits to being very physical as a boy. He is also a black belt in both judo and karate. Seeing him on TV in his stylish designer shorts he looks less athletic than stringy. In the flesh though he is what most women would call a 'hunk' - broadchested with a

well sculptured physique he simply oozes masculinity and fitness. Slightly broadchested with a

dent he says to model suits while the jeans contract is being negotiated. Management aside, Gary has turned down so many assignments that the average male model, forever chasing work, might well tear out his own hair in exasperation. But it is not caprice, nor even good business sense that dictates what he does or doesn't model. A lot of it is to do with ethics, in particular loyalty.

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Sadly, like too many hot prospects, at the start of his career Gary was plagued by managerial problems. Also, somewhat ill-advisedly he continued to train with a hand injury. Altogether he was out of the ring for about a year. I asked him if this was what led to his taking up modelling, but he insists it was not. "I don't think I could ever have had a usual kind of lifestyle.... maybe something crazy; I could have been an actor or gone to drama school.... I don't think I could work nine to five."

With his boxing career temporarily on ice Gary indulged freely in his other great passions: music and cars. He sings, writes music, plays guitar, piano, and as

panded considerably. He worked for several other agencies as well.

He has done a couple of catwalk jobs, and says he found them 'funny'. His main incentive was financial, because although as British champion and a world rated fighter he is a name, he says in the early days it used to cost him money to fight. "In my career, for three years I earned nothing. I used to train for ten, twelve weeks, then earn silly money for five. With that kind of thing you've got to do something, so the modelling

would fit in with the boxing. He was glad of the money then, but says there are problems now. A lot of people and companies want to use him now, but for his name rather than as a model. There are some assignments which he would be willing to undertake as a model, but not as Gary Stretch, so now he has a business manager Nick Scott, who he describes as 'fabulous'. Nick handles modelling, promo and Gary's other business inter-

Gary plans to quit the ring at the age of 27 and finish with boxing altogether. Does he plan then to go into modelling full time, or films perhaps? He says he would consider acting if the money and the film were both

right, but of modelling he says: "I am not a model and never was a model; I just did a bit of modelling work because it fitted in."

It's difficult to credit that someone in his position, with an abundance of natural talent, the world at his feet and lucrative offers coming at him from all directions is afraid to take the bit between his teeth, but Gary Stretch is a genuinely reluctant hero and, one senses, far from the happiest of men. Another thing he puts down is his 'glamour boy' image. At times, certain elements of the press have made him out to be a bit of a ladies man, to put it mildly. In reality though he says he hardly ever goes to night clubs, is not a 'drinker' and, incredibly, has not had a girlfriend for six months.

...catwalk jobs are 'funny'...

ests. Gary Stretch, 'the boxer' is kept entirely separate and is managed by Frank Warren. In his early modelling days he used to do numerous small assignments, but now he is concentrating on working for large corporations. He has been approached by an airline company and is also negotiating with a major jeans manufacturer, so watch out for his face

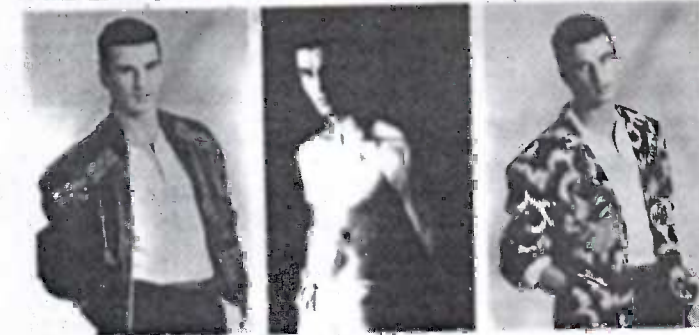
on TV soon.

He has been offered a lot of small modelling jobs here and there, but says his management won't let him do them, and he has full confidence in Nick Scott's judgement. It wouldn't be pru-

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a boy, played the violin. During his year out of the ring he also spent some time working as an ad hoc car dealer. This came about because he was forever changing his car. At present he has a turbo charged Porsche, but next month he will be trading it in. He says for him this is about par for the course.

He began modelling by accident. "I was sitting in a pub one day and a lady came over to me and said: 'Are you a model?' When he said he wasn't she asked him if he'd be inter-



Gary Stretch is a part time male model with a difference. Six foot one, muscular, and with the slightly sinister dark good looks that led to him being offered a part in a film about the Kray twins, he is less at home on the catwalk than in the square ring. When he checked in at the reception desk at the Docklands Arena where I met him the re-

ceptionist asked him for his name so she could issue him with a visitor's pass. Obviously not a boxing fan, she

...failed to recognise champion!

had failed to recognise the light-middleweight champion of Britain. In the near future he expects his face to be

better known, for with supreme confidence rather than arrogance he predicts he will fight for and win the world title in 1990. Lending credence to this claim is an impressive amateur career which culminated in his winning the 1985 NABC title, and a pro record of 21 wins in 22 fights, his sole defeat resulting from a cut eye stoppage against an opponent who subsequently

by Alexander Baron

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