

Beverly Johnson

Beverly Ann Johnson^{[1][3]} (born October 13, 1952)^[4] is an American model, actress, singer, and businesswoman. Johnson rose to fame when she became the first African-American model to appear on the cover of American *Vogue* in August 1974.^{[5][6]} In 1975, Johnson became the first black woman to appear on the cover of the French edition of *Elle*.^[7] In 2012, Johnson was the star of the reality series *Beverly's Full House* that aired on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). *The New York Times* named Johnson one of the 20th century's most influential people in fashion in 2008.^[8]

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Early life and career

Born the first of two children to Gloria Johnson,^[9] a surgical technician, Johnson was raised in a middle-class family in Buffalo, New York. During her youth, Johnson was a champion swimmer and aspired to be a lawyer.^[4] Johnson attended Bennett High School,^[10] graduating in 1969.^[1] After high school, Johnson went on to study criminal justice at Northeastern University. While in college, Johnson tried modeling^[11] while on summer break in 1971.^[4] She quickly landed an assignment with *Glamour* and began working steadily.^[11] She went on to appear on more than 500 magazine covers, including the August 1974 issue of *Vogue*, becoming the magazine's first African-American cover model.^[4] Her appearance on the cover changed the beauty ideal in US fashion, and by 1975, every major American fashion designer had begun using African-American models.^[12]

In addition to modeling, Johnson has also written a book, *Beverly Johnson's Guide to a Life of Health and Beauty*,^[13] and embarked on an acting career.^[14] She has also had roles in the films *Ashanti* (1979), *The Meteor Man* (1993), *Def Jam's How to Be a Player* (1997), and *Crossroads* (2002). She has appeared in

Beverly Johnson



Johnson in 2007

Born	<div>Beverly Ann Johnson^{[1][2]}</div> <div>October 13, 1952</div> <div>Buffalo, New York, U.S.</div>
Nationality	American
Alma mater	Northeastern University
Occupation	Model · actress · singer · businesswoman
Years active	1970–present
Known for	First African–American model on <i>Vogue</i> cover, August 1974 ^[2]
Spouse(s)	<div><div>Billy Potter</div><div>(m. 1971; div. 1974)</div><div><div>Danny Sims</div><div>(m. 1977; div. 1979)</div></div></div>
Children	1
Modeling information	

guest spots on 7 television series, including *Martin* (TV series), *Law & Order*, *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*, *The Parent 'Hood* and the Super Bowl episode of *3rd Rock from the Sun* (1998). She served for two seasons as a celebrity judge on the TV Land series *She's Got the Look*, a reality series, where women aged over 35 compete for a modeling contract and magazine spread. At the start of the series in 2008, Johnson shared that she and other models had suffered from anorexia and bulimia during her career.^[15] She had a brief singing career, releasing one album in 1979 on Buddah Records. Johnson has been a longtime hair and beauty influencer.

Height	5 ft 8 in (1.73 m)
Hair color	Dark brown
Eye color	Brown

Memoir and accusation against Bill Cosby

In late 2014, she wrote an article for *Vanity Fair*^[16] in which she accused Bill Cosby of drugging her in a meeting at his Manhattan residence in the 1980s, although the incident did not result in a sexual assault. Johnson said that Cosby spiked a cup of cappuccino with an unknown drug. As she felt her "body go completely limp," she realized what was happening. Johnson said she then screamed and cursed at him several times before Cosby got angry and dragged her outside and hailed a cab for her. Johnson decided to tell her story in hopes that "by going public" she would "encourage anyone [who] has been sexually victimized to speak out."^[17]^[18] Her memoir, *The Face That Changed It All*, which discusses the Cosby incident, was released on August 25, 2015.

Subsequently, Cosby started a defamation law suit against Johnson, alleging that she was lying about the drugging incident and contending that Johnson's story, first told in the *Vanity Fair* article, had been repeated in numerous interviews. It seeks unspecified damages and an injunction preventing the model from repeating her claims and requests they be removed from Johnson's memoir.^[19] A friend of Johnson said, "She expected this to happen. She didn't seem upset 'with the news', but I think she's prepared to counter-sue."^[20] Cosby dropped the lawsuit on February 19, 2016, to devote more time to his criminal case.^[21]

Personal life

Johnson has been married twice. Her first marriage was to real estate agent Billy Potter in 1971, later divorcing in 1974. On May 8, 1977,^[22]^[23] Johnson, then aged 25, married 40-year old businessman and music producer Danny Sims.^[24]^[25] Johnson gave birth to their daughter, Anansa Sims on December 27, 1978, in New York City, New York.^[26]^[14] Johnson and Sims divorced in 1979. After her marriage to Sims, Johnson and actor Chris Noth were in a long-term relationship until 2001.

Filmography

Year	Title	Role	Other notes
1976	<i>Deadly Hero</i>		
	<i>Emergency!</i>		TV, 1 episode
1977	<i>The Baron</i>		
1978	<i>Crisis in Sun Valley</i>	Beverly	Television film
1979	<i>Ashanti</i>	Dr. Anansa Linderby	Alternative title: <i>Ashanti, Land of No Mercy</i>
1980	<i>The Sky Is Gray</i>	John Lee's Mother	Television film
1990	<i>Hunter</i>	Allistar Lang	TV, 1 episode
1992–1993	<i>Law & Order</i>	Marcela/Salamotu	TV, 2 episodes
1993	<i>Martin</i>	Ms. Trinidad	

	<u><i>Loaded Weapon 1</i></u>	Doris Luger	
	<u><i>The Meteor Man</i></u>	Woman Doctor	
	<i>The Cover Girl Murders</i>	Michaela	Television film
	<i>A Perry Mason Mystery: The Case of the Wicked Wives</i>	Jane Marlowe Morrison	Television film
1994	<i>A Brilliant Disguise</i>	Barbara	
	<u><i>Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman</i></u>	Mrs. Cox	TV, 2 episodes
1995	<u><i>The Wayans Bros.</i></u>	Miss Kita	TV, 1 episode
	<i>Ray Alexander: A Menu for Murder</i>	Alana Durand	Television film
1996	<u><i>Red Shoe Diaries</i></u>	Lorri	TV, 1 episode
	<u><i>Crossworlds</i></u>	The Queen	
	<u><i>The Parent 'Hood</i></u>	Mrs. Jordon	TV, 1 episode
1997	<i>True Vengeance</i>	Lt. Kada Wilson	Alternative title: <i>Truth or Consequences</i>
	<u><i>Sabrina, the Teenage Witch</i></u>	Fashion designer	TV, 1 episode
	<u><i>Def Jam's How to Be a Player</i></u>	Robin	
1998	<u><i>3rd Rock from the Sun</i></u>	Prell	TV, 2 episodes
	<u><i>54</i></u>	Elaine's Patron	
2000	<i>Down 'n Dirty</i>	Sandra Collins	
2002	<u><i>Crossroads</i></u>	Kit's Mother	
	<i>Red Shoe Diaries 15: Forbidden Zone</i>	Lorri	Segment: The Forbidden Zone
2010	<u><i>Tyler Perry's Meet The Browns</i></u>	Kate	1 episode
2012	<u><i>Beverly's Full House</i></u>	Herself	TV, 8 episodes

Discography

Albums

- *Don't Lose The Feeling* (1979)

Singles

- "Don't Lose The Feeling" (1979)
- "Don't Run for a Cover" (1979)

See also

- Liberian Girl

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External links

- Official website (<http://beverly-johnson.com>)
- Beverly Johnson (<https://www.facebook.com/SupermodelBeverlyJohnson>) on Facebook
- Beverly Johnson (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0424588/>) on IMDb
- Beverly Johnson (https://www.fashionmodeldirectory.com/models/Beverly_Johnson/) at Fashion Model Directory
- Beverly Johnson on Tvland.com (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090607093448/http://www.tvland.com/prime/shows/shesgotthelook/season2/judges.jhtml>)

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