

Free research paper on mackenzie phillips

[Family](#), [Father](#)



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Biography

Mackenzie Phillips was born on 10th November 1959 in Alexandria, Virginia in the United States of America. Her parents were celebrities John Phillips and Susan Phillips. The father was a rock musician while the mother was a ballerina dancer. Mackenzie had four siblings namely Jeffrey Phillips, Tamerlane Phillips, Chynna Phillips and Bijou Phillips. The latter two were a singer and an actress respectively. Her father later married Michelle Gilliam after divorcing his first wife Susan Phillips when Mackenzie was 3 years old. Mackenzie's family life was troubled given the early family separation. At the age of three, her mother had parted with her father and her father had since married another lady. Mackenzie nonetheless moved on with her life. She joined Highland Hall Waldorf School in Northridge, California. In her prime life, Mackenzie first married Jeffrey Sessler between the years 1979 to 1981, and later divorced and married Michael Barakan between 1996 and 2000. She was blessed with one child in her second married, Shane Barakan born

in 1987 and now a musician. She has since married Keith Levenson in 2005 to date.

Career

Phillips' career began in the 1970s. In 1972 she appeared in the American Graffiti filming which was officially released in 1974. In the American Graffiti, she acted as Carol Morrison, a role that she played as a young beautiful girl who was accidentally picked up by a hot rodding teenager John Miller. It was the first appearance that made her name in the industry. She played her role well immediately eliciting positive reactions from the public and gaining public attention and admiration. At her tender age she had gained a celebrity status. In consonance with the state of law of California, Phillips was entitled to a guardian in respect of her remuneration earned in the staged film. The film producer, Gary Kurtz, became her legal guardian.

Her good performance in the American Graffiti earned her a place at the next biggest hit, the American sitcom; One Day at a Time. In the latter, she starred with co-starring Valerie Bertinelli. In the sitcom, she became the highest paid, earning a weekly wage of around \$ 47, 500. She was reportedly described as an overnight success. This was later to be cut short following drug cases during the third season of the show in 1980. She was later allowed back into the show in 1981 after embarking on a program to stop the consumption and use of substances and drugs. However, in 1982 she collapsed during the filming of the show. On hospitalization, cocaine was traced in her blood. She had become a hard consumer of drugs who needed rehabilitation. She temporary quit her career pursuits. She later emerged to reform the version of her father's show the Mamas & the Papas in a new

version known as The New Mamas and The Papas. In 1999, Phillips appeared in Disney Channel's So Weird which she co-starred with Cara DeLizia. In early and late 2000s Phillips has made appearances in Double Teamed, ER, Without a Trace, 7th Heaven and Cold Case. The latest career presentation from Phillips can be seen in her book, High on Arrival released in 2009 which has given a comprehensive analysis on her life's ups and downs. Her numerous appearances in different acts and capacities had conspired to give her the celebrity status she did enjoy. For Phillips, it was celebrity as early as twelve when she made her first appearance in the American Graffiti.

Social Life

Unfortunately Phillips' life has not been as entertaining as was her career pursuits. In many cases she has been confronted with social problems bordering on the abuse of drugs and drunkenness. This cannot be mentioned in isolation of her father; musician John Phillips. It was her father who introduced her to hard drugs at an early age of only twelve. Her father, a heavy consumer, administered drugs into her system through injections. Therefore, it can be argued that her father introduced her into drugs. Since then, Phillips became a loyal consumer of drugs. In February 1980 Phillips was fired from the sitcom One Day at a Time allegedly for her involvement in the consumption of drugs and alcohol. She portrayed a serious case of drug and alcohol abuse. The Sitcom briefly took her back in 1981 before she collapsed in the studio during the shoot-out. She was permanently sacked after that incident. After that incidence she continued to consume hard drugs and was hospitalized for drug related illness several times.

In 2008, she was arrested and charged with the possession of cocaine and

heroin at the Los Angeles Airport. In the case, she was defended by her attorney, Blair Berk. She pleaded guilty to the charge of possession of cocaine and heroin contrary to the provision of the laws of the land. She pleaded guilty and was sentenced to rehabilitation for drug abusers. She successfully fulfilled her drug rehabilitation program requirements and was set free thereon. She was later to appear in the third season of the Celebrity Rehab and the View where she candidly spoke about her drug abuse problem.

Other than her substance abuse case, her book, *High on Arrival*, revealed a highly guarded and scandalized secret. That is her father's sexual exploits which began on the eve of her first wedding when she was only 18.

Apparently, her father, musician John Phillips, had repeatedly had sexual intercourse with her. Mackenzie agrees to voluntarily consenting to having sex with her father, a situation which continued for around ten years during the duration of her first marriage. She has since confirmed that her father had the first sexual intercourse with her during the eve of her wedding. She indicates that she does not know how it all started but she had found herself indulging in sexual intercourse with her father. The practice was to continue consistently in what she describes as not daily, not weekly but regularly. She indicates that her father not only introduced her into drugs but in the same vein introduced her into the world of illicit sexual affairs. One interesting thing to note is her father's suggestion that they move out and settle in places where incest was allowed. Apparently, the father had proposed Fiji as one of the safe havens where father child sexual intercourse was entertained and normal. However, while the exact and precise genesis of the sexual

relationship between father and daughter remains scanty and undetailed, Phillips narrates with detail the end of the relationship. She says she regularly had sexual intercourse with her first husband as well. At some point around ten years since the illicit sexual behavior had begun she became pregnant and was not sure who between her father and her husband, was the father of the child. It was at this time that Phillips reached the conclusion to stop the sexual exploits and escapades with her father. She decided not to have sex with her father anymore and says that since then she denied him any permission and discouraged his advances. Phillips posits that her father paid for the abortion further casting aspersions as to who could have actually sired the kid. Interestingly, her stepmothers at the time that the supposedly sexual intercourse was taking place deny the possibility of John Phillips ever abusing his own daughter. Michelle Phillips, for instance, asserts that such behavior was inconsistent with the demeanor and behavior of her husband then and that she does not find any reason to believe Mackenzie Phillips. Instead, Michele has offered the explanation that her step daughter has suffered a mental condition and that she could be well within the province of psychiatrist illness. On the other hand, Mackenzie's siblings hold diverse opinions over the issue. While Chynna believes her sister and finds the occurrence possible, Bijou Phillips denies such an occurrence and says that her dad was too good to be able to commit such an illegality and morality. However, in the overall, the world tends to listen to Mackenzie's version and have since believed that she was a victim of incest by her father. In addition, it is imperative to note the fact that Mackenzie has since revised and adjusted her view that the sexual relationship with her father was purely

consensual. She believes like all incestuous victims do, that parents often have immense and overriding power over their children and that in no way could it be that she had voluntarily consented to the incest.

Post Stardom and Personal Reflection

In a summary, the life of Mackenzie Phillips is one illumination into the double and contrasting conditions often facing celebrities. Phillips serves as a good example of persons who become celebrities early in life in situations that are more like accidents rather than by design. The void created by the absence of her mother and buoyed by a drug abuser, immoral and selfish father who put his own personal interests over the interests of the daughter is imminent. It comes out clearly that she was introduced into drugs by her father, was molested and later came out of the abuse rather wasted. However, one also needs to appreciate the role the rehabilitation played in the life of Phillips. Even as she lives her post stardom days, her story will reverberate in the space for some time and her tenacity and resilience in the face of adversity remains admirable for many to follow. In addition, her life confirms the positions more often propounded by theorists and researchers on the life of celebrities. It comes out clearly that Phillips was a victim of circumstances whose failures can be fully blamed on her father. It should be noted that the familial breakdown in her family has been further extended to her own life as she has personally gone through two divorces. The message from her life story resonates around the role of family in the development and support of celebrities.

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