



# High On Arrival: A Memoir

By Mackenzie Phillips

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Mackenzie Phillips shares “a raw glimpse” (*Entertainment Weekly*) into her lifelong battle with personal demons and near-fatal addictions—and reveals the shattering truth behind her complex, secretive, and damaging history with her father, the legendary John Phillips of The Mamas & the Papas.

Not long before her fiftieth birthday, Mackenzie Phillips made headlines with her arrest for drug possession at Los Angeles International Airport; the actor-musician-mother had been on her way to a reunion of *One Day at a Time*, the hugely popular '70s sitcom on which she once starred as the lovable rebel Julie Cooper.

Born into rock-and-roll royalty, flying in Learjets to the Virgin Islands at five, making pot brownies with Donovan at eleven, Mackenzie grew up in an all-access kingdom of hippie freedom and heroin cool. As a rising Hollywood star herself, she joined the nonstop party in the hedonistic pleasure dome of her father's making, and a rapt TV audience watched as Julie Cooper wasted away before their eyes. By the time Mackenzie discovered how deep and dark her father's trip was going, it was too late.

As an adult, she has paid dearly for a lifetime of excess, working tirelessly to reconcile her wonderful, terrible past and the pull of her magnetic father. By sharing her journey toward redemption and peace, the star who turned up *High on Arrival* has finally come back down to earth—to stay.

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## High On Arrival: A Memoir By Mackenzie Phillips Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"I felt many things while reading this book -- which I did in one overnight sitting -- but when I reached the last page I felt only one: a tremendous respect for its author and a deep appreciation of just exactly how courageous she is to publish this book. This is no celebrity addiction memoir. And it is no 'former child star falls from grace' saga, either. It is the heart-wrenching and perilous story that thousands and thousands of perfectly ordinary women and men lived themselves, silently, numbly, and with obedience and love. By making her search for redemption public -- despite the inevitable backlash -- Mackenzie Phillips may very well help others find it for themselves. Rich with compassion, forgiveness, and wisdom, this is a brave memoir executed with an unwavering loyalty and commitment to truth." -- Augusten Burroughs

### About the Author

Mackenzie Phillips is the daughter of John Phillips and stepdaughter of Michelle Phillips, both lead singers of the 60s band The Mamas and The Papas. She starred as Julie Cooper Horvath on the sitcom *One Day at a Time* alongside Valerie Bertinelli. Today, Phillips works at Breathe Life Healing center in West Hollywood as a substance abuse counselor.

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### 1

Our condo: a perfectly nice place to live. My mother kept an orderly, clean house. She drove us to school every day and cooked dinner every night. She was a proper lady, the kind of woman who never wore white after Labor Day, crossed her legs at the ankle, and expected her children to be well mannered and respectful. We said please and thank you. We never let the screen door slam. We knew how to set a dinner table. My mother was sweet and warm, and she knew how to make life fun for my brother Jeffrey and me even if there wasn't much money. She'd buy a bunch of beads and we'd sit by the fire making necklaces. We'd cover the kitchen table with newspaper and have crab legs like we used to when we lived in Virginia. There was laughing, singing, dancing, and playing dress-up. At bedtime, she cuddled me, held me, called me Laurabelle, my little snowflake, my baby girl. These are the things that a mother does, and we expected them. Five days a week. But when Friday rolled around, everything changed.

Weekends, we entered another world. My dad, John Phillips, was a rock star, the leader and songwriter of the Mamas & the Papas. The Mamas & the Papas were huge in 1966. Their first album had just come out, and it was the number one album on the Billboard 200. Money poured in from hits like "Monday, Monday" and "California Dreamin'." Dad was fabulously rich and famous.

After school on Friday, a cavernous Fleetwood limo would glide down our street in Tarzana, a suburban neighborhood in L.A.'s San Fernando Valley. The limo would roll to a stop in front of our condo complex. I was six years old and my brother was seven. The neighborhood children would make thrones out of their hands and carry us to the car. As we climbed in, the kids would peer in the windows, hoping to get a glimpse of our father. He was never in the car. The engine purred, and we slid out of reality. The limo would transport us to either Dad's mansion in Bel Air or his mansion in the Malibu Colony, where our relatively stable childhood veered down a psychopharma rabbit hole.

I was conceived during a short reconciliation between my parents. As a little girl I hardly lived with my father. My dad had ditched my mother for a sixteen-year-old girl named Michelle when I was two, maybe

younger. In the next few years Mom began to work at the Pentagon to support the three of us -- herself, my brother, and me. There wasn't a lot of money, we lived in a small apartment in Alexandria, Virginia, and my mom dated a lot. Every Sunday we had dinner, either at my grandmother Dini's or at my aunt Rosie's. Meanwhile, Dad and his new wife, Michelle Phillips, became famous with the Mamas & the Papas practically overnight and lived a recklessly extravagant life.

Dad and Michelle made their home in Los Angeles, and eventually my mother moved there too, so now my parents were living in the same city, but in different worlds. Dad and Michelle's life felt like a fairy tale. She was beautiful and so young, the quintessential California girl. Dad was almost six foot six and dressed in handmade floor-length caftans and the like. He looked...like Jesus in tie-dye. On weekends Michelle took me clothes shopping at Bambola in Beverly Hills. She bought me tiny kid gloves in all different colors, dresses with matching coats, ankle socks, and Mary Janes. This alone was enough to make a princess out of me, but the dichotomy between my parents' lives was far bigger than being spoiled with clothes by Michelle. As soon as we drove through the massive wrought-iron gate of Bel Air, the contrast was mind-boggling. We were special. We were royalty.

My father was always surrounded by a noisy, outrageous, wild party. Rock 'n' roll stars, aristocracy, and Hollywood trash streamed in and out of his homes. He lived beyond his means. There were eight Rolls-Royces in the driveway and two Ferraris. The house was full of priceless antiques, but if something broke, it never got fixed. The housekeeper hadn't been paid, or she was fucking my father. There was a cook, but nobody shopped for food. The house was complete chaos, a bizarre mix of excess and oblivion, luxury and incompetence. I swam naked at midnight in the pool or the ocean and scrounged for dinner. I chased the pet peacocks around the estate grounds and had no idea what I might hear or see on any given night.

At the house in Bel Air my brother and I shared a room with twin beds. One night we awoke to hear Dad and Michelle making some kind of ruckus. It surpassed the everyday level of ruckus, so we sat up in bed and started calling for them, "Hey! What's going on?"

Michelle came into the room. She said, "Don't worry, your father and I were just playing." She was carrying a long stick with metal stubs poking out of it. Jeffrey and I looked at each other. This was no innocent game of Monopoly. Years later I channel-surfed past a show about cowboys and recognized the weird stick Michelle had been holding that night. It was a cattle prod. They were chasing each other around with a cattle prod. That may have been an isolated bizarre incident. But life then seemed to be nothing but a long, continuous series of isolated bizarre incidents, so much weirdness every day that the weirdness became everyday.

The Mamas & the Papas played the Hollywood Bowl, a famous amphitheater smack in the middle of Hollywood. It was the Mamas & the Papas' first formal live gig. Michelle decided to commemorate the event by piercing my ears. I was seven years old, compliant -- a perfect dress-up doll for Michelle. She sat me on the bedroom floor and gathered a sewing needle, pink thread, ice, and a wine cork. Holding the wine cork behind my ear to protect my neck, she forced the threaded needle through my ear, and then tied little peacock feathers (from the pet peacocks) to the ends of the pink threads. Michelle had assembled her tools so thoughtfully and executed the procedure so calmly -- which was even more impressive when I later found out she was on acid at the time.

Barry McGuire, who sang "Eve of Destruction," was coming with us to the Bowl. He was dressed in a cream-colored suit, but he couldn't find his shoes, so he painted his feet green. If I'd been a few years older I certainly would have figured out that they were all either on acid or, like me, following the lead of those who were.

The Hollywood Bowl show is fuzzy. I was really young. I remember screaming, "Dad! Dad!" from the audience. Later, backstage, I met Jimi Hendrix. Jimi Hendrix didn't mean much to me -- he had not yet ignited his guitar onstage at the Monterey Pop Festival, which my father would organize. A giant purple velvet hat floats in my consciousness, attached to the name Hendrix, a vague visual footnote, my own purple haze.

My mother flipped out when she saw that my virgin earlobes had been violated. Pearl studs at eighteen was more her cup of tea. Plus, the threads weren't big enough for earrings and I had to have my ears repierced, and the holes were completely crooked and have been my whole life. For all the asymmetry of my childhood, I'm still disproportionately pissed off about that.

It was a double life: doing what was expected at my mother's, and not answering to anyone at my dad's. I always was aware of the effect my father had on my mom. Even in my seven-year-old brain, I was aware that she was envious, angry, and sad. Often sad. I worried as much as a child can, but the fun at my dad's was irresistible. There was music, guitars, parties, rock stars, and the very seductive attitude of "We're all kids here." I'd ask my dad, "Can I go play on the beach?" and he'd say, "Whatever turns you on, kid." So I'd burst out the back door, free, a crazy kid chasing the dogs on the beach until we were all worn out. Occasionally the cook would attempt to impose a modicum of order. She'd say, "Now, young lady, you clean your room. Your dad's going to be mad," and I'd say, "No, he's not." How could he when he lived so wild? Meanwhile, in Tarzana, my mom was watching me walk down the street, yelling after me to tuck in my shirt. She was trying her best to raise her kids, but we were being shown another kind of life, and it was no competition. Would you rather live at Disneyland or in a condo in Tarzana? Being at Dad's was like riding the Matterhorn all day long, and the weekends, by moment and memory, dominated the school week.

My dad's friends never treated me like a child, not exactly. I was more like an accessory, a cute little prop who might amuse or entertain. One weekend before we'd moved to Los Angeles from Virginia -- I must have been five or six -- we were with Dad in L.A. for a visit. His fellow band member Cass Eliot (the other "Mama") had a party at her house in Laurel Canyon. We walked into Cass's house and there were Paul McCartney and George Harrison.

When I saw Paul McCartney I glommed on to him like a baby groupie. He kept saying, "Go on, love, get up and dance." In a rare moment of shyness, I demurred. I was afraid people would laugh at me. He insisted. I refused. This exchange circled, a teasing game between a little kid and a world-famous musician.

Finally I broke down and started dancing. The adults began to point and laugh at the little five-year-old dancing for the rock star. I turned bright red and burst into tears, but then Paul McCartney started consoling me. I was no dummy. I liked being consoled by Paul McCartney. The more he comforted, the more tears I summoned. Finally he picked me up and carried me into a hammock that was suspended in the middle of Cass's dining room on a pulley. Someone hoisted us up, up, up. The ceilings were two stories tall and we were suspended fifteen feet in the air. I was still snuffling. Paul snuggled up with me until I finally calmed down and eventually fell asleep. The two of us napped together in that hammock, suspended high above the party. You could say I got high and slept with Paul McCartney.

There was something about my father. He was a cool, countercultural guy who attracted some of the most creative people of his time: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Gram Parsons, Warren Beatty, Jane Fonda, Jack Nicholson, Can...

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Richard Twombly:**

This High On Arrival: A Memoir book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get facts which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. This kind of High On Arrival: A Memoir without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't become worry High On Arrival: A Memoir can bring if you are and not make your case space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even cell phone. This High On Arrival: A Memoir having excellent arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

**Betty Serrano:**

Spent a free time for you to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, gonna beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Will you something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book can be option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the publication untitled High On Arrival: A Memoir can be good book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

**Jennifer Smith:**

Exactly why? Because this High On Arrival: A Memoir is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap it but latter it will zap you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such amazing way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were being you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

**Linda Soto:**

In this period globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you personally is High On Arrival: A Memoir this guide consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This book was represented how does the world has grown up. The language styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That is why this book suitable all of you.

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