

Paris Hilton

Contributed by Marion Harpsak
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Paris Hilton is one of America's most famous women today. She is most well known for her frequent appearances on television, including shows of her own such as Fox's hit reality series 'The Simple Life', and for her reputation as a partier. An actor, model, singer and heiress to the Hilton Hotel fortune, Paris Hilton has become a household name throughout America.

Parish Whitney Hilton was born on February 17, 1981 in New York City to Richard and Kathy Hilton. She is the oldest of four children, next in line being her younger sister Nicky, followed by her brothers Barron and Conrad. Paris Hilton grew up living in a few different affluent homes, including one in the Hamptons, one in Beverley Hills, and a suite in Manhattan's Waldorf-Asotria Hotel. She attended a high school in New York but eventually dropped out, going on to earn her GED instead. Opting not to go on to college, Paris instead began working as a fashion model for Catherine Maladrino and Marc Bouer in an advertising campaign for an Italian label. She also had several brief appearances in movies, such as Zoolander and The Cat in the Hat. British actor Stephen Fry describe it best when he observed recently to Lowdown that being Paris "takes a startling vanity, an enormous lack of self-knowledge and a huge amount of greed and desire." Though already a well-known name, it was a sex video starring her and her friend Rick Salomon that really began Paris's rise to the celebrity status she holds today. The video leaked out onto the Internet and Paris Hilton's fame skyrocketed. Salomon went on to release the video on DVD, only to be sued by Paris shortly thereafter. The suit was resolved with Paris receiving a substantial cash settlement and a portion of the DVD's profits. Her newly found fame landed her a number of supporting parts in movies, commercials, and television shows including the aforementioned 'The Simple Life' series shown on Fox. Her fame has also found her rising criticism, and she was even negatively parodied on a 'South Park' episode. Her status as a celebrity and her effect as a role model for American girls is an almost controversial issue all on its own; she is widely discussed on tabloids and in magazines, and more than likely will be for some time to come. In spite of criticism, or perhaps because of it, Paris Hilton is a popular icon in America today. She has her own line of jewelry, her own record label, and is releasing her first album shortly. Now styling herself as an entrepreneur, only time will tell if her business ventures meet with as much success as her acting and modeling career has.