



# Uncommon Youth: The Gilded Life and Tragic Times of J. Paul Getty III

*Charles Fox*

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The glamorous life, gilded family, and tragic times of J. Paul Getty III, whose kidnapping made headlines in 1973

J. Paul ("Little Paul") Getty III, the grandson of Getty Oil founder J. Paul Getty, may have been cursed by money and privilege from the moment he was born. Falling in with the wrong people and practically abandoned by his famous family, Getty was a child of his international jet set era, moving from Marrakesh to Rome, nightclubs to well-appointed drug dens. His high-profile kidnapping defined the decade—and was permanently memorable for the ear that was mailed to his mother as evidence of the kidnappers' intentions.

*Uncommon Youth* is richly reported, and includes many interviews with Getty himself conducted from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, that raise new angles about the case. How much did Getty acquiesce to the kidnappers? Why wouldn't his rich-as-Croesus grandfather pay the ransom, which began at the equivalent of \$550,000 in lire and bulged to 3.6 million as the months dragged on? Charles Fox began following and researching this story since the days shortly after Getty's disappearance. Fox's writing captures the voices of models and maids, mistresses and mothers, carabinieri and club-owners, drug dealers and drivers, alongside the Getty family members themselves to paint an evocative portrait of an era and one of its most misunderstood participants.

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