

Hearst, Patty (1954-) Encyclopedia Article

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The granddaughter of newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst, 19-year-old heiress Patty Hearst was abducted from her Berkeley college residence in February 1974, sparking the biggest manhunt since the Lindbergh kidnapping. Surprisingly, Hearst was next spotted in bank surveillance footage, brandishing automatic weapons during robberies. She released statements stating she had sided with her captors, members of the revolutionary Symbionese Liberation Army, and renounced her family. Los Angeles police had a televised shootout with SLA members, but Hearst, who now called herself "Tania," fled. She was apprehended in September of 1975. At her trial, famed defense attorney F. Lee Bailey maintained that Hearst had been brainwashed by SLA leaders through psychological torture, and was thus not responsible for her crime spree. Hearst was nonetheless convicted and sentenced to prison in 1977. Two years later, her sentence was commuted by President Jimmy Carter. The Hearst episode was sensationalized in the media of the day. She married her prison guard and retired to life as a middle-class home-maker. By the 1990s, however, she was resigned to her notoriety and began writing mystery novels and acting in outré movies, including bad-taste auteur John Waters' *Pecker* (1998).

Further Reading:

Alexander, Shana. *Anyone's Daughter: The Times and Trials of Patty Hearst*. New York, Viking, 1979.

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Hearst, Patricia, with Alvin Moscow. *Every Secret Thing*. New York, Doubleday, 1982.

Reeves, Kenneth J. *The Trial of Patty Hearst* (trial transcript). San Francisco, Great Fidelity Press, 1976.

Weed, Steven, with Scott Swanton. *My Search for Patty Hearst*. New York, Crown, 1976.