# The rise and fall of Michelle Mone shines a light on fame, fortune and scandal



The narrative of Michelle Mone is one of striking contrasts—a tale where entrepreneurial spirit meets the harsh realities of scandal and public scrutiny. The newly released documentary, *The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone*, offers a compelling examination of her life, charting her journey from humble beginnings in Glasgow's East End to the heights of fame associated with her lingerie brand, Ultimo, and her subsequent dalliance with controversy.

Mone found her initial spark of inspiration in the 1990s while holidaying in Florida, where she stumbled upon an advertisement for a breast-enhancing bra insert. This moment ignited not only her ambition but eventually led to the founding of Ultimo. The brand was marketed as a brave challenger to established giants like Gossard and Playtex, with Mone positioning herself as the personification of resilience and determination. According to the documentary, her public persona was carefully crafted to encapsulate the zeitgeist of the late '90s—a period filled with a celebration of girl power and an emerging entrepreneurial landscape in Britain.

Yet, the documentary probes deeper than mere glitz and glamour. It reveals a labyrinth of personal challenges, contrasting her public triumphs with her turbulent private life. Mone's tough ascent documented by various sources, including people she worked closely with, showcases not only her negotiating skills but also illuminates her contentious relationships with former colleagues and industry insiders. Virginia Marcolin, a lingerie buyer at Selfridges during the late '90s, recalls the combative tenacity of Mone in their dealings, presenting her as a formidable figure in a predominantly male business landscape.

However, beneath the surface of this seemingly fairytale story lies a more complex reality. While Mone projected significant profits from Ultimo, documentation and tribunal judgments reveal that the brand was teetering towards insolvency before being salvaged by Sri Lankan partner MAS Holdings. This nuance highlights the precarious nature of Mone's entrepreneurial claims, suggesting that her success may have been more a performance than a sustainable business model. The documentary captures this tension, raising questions about the authenticity of the narrative Mone has constructed around her achievements.

As Mone transitioned into a life of political influence, becoming a baroness in 2015, the stakes rose considerably. The narrative takes a darker turn with her entanglement in the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. Allegations surfaced suggesting that she and her husband, Doug Barrowman, leveraged their political connections to secure a lucrative government contract for PPE supplies, which later came under fire for delivering faulty products. The documentary aligns these events with a broader critique of British societal values, offering viewers a chance to reflect on the implications of wealth, fame, and accountability.

That the documentary unfolds as both a tantalising narrative and an investigative piece is testament to its multifaceted approach. Interviewing friends, advisors, and colleagues, it aims to present a thorough exploration of Mone's life choices while shedding light on the value systems within which she operated. The focus shifts from simple admiration to a more critical analysis of how public personas can obscure deeper, often troubling truths.

As *The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone* progresses, it intertwines Mone’s historic ascent with her recent scandals, culminating in a gripping finale that explores the reputational impact and potential legal ramifications of her actions. This documentary does not merely recount a life story; it encapsulates an era, acting as a cultural artefact of a changing Britain. Mone's journey, steeped in ambition, controversy, and mystique, serves as a cautionary tale encapsulating the volatile intersection of business pursuits and public life.

Ultimately, the documentary raises crucial questions about fame, accountability, and the consequences of ambition in the public eye—a reflection that echoes far beyond Mone’s own narrative and speaks to contemporary societal dynamics.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/28/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-review-documentary-bbc), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2024/bbc-commission-documentary-series-telling-story-of-michelle-mone)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/28/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-review-documentary-bbc), [[4]](https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/bbc-riseandfall-michellemone-ann1)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/25/michelle-mone-leading-entrepreneur-or-lucky-baroness), [[5]](https://www.inkl.com/news/bbc-reveals-details-of-new-series-on-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://newsvoice.info/article/page/dailyrecord/news/tv-documentary-michelle-mone-ppe-34536887), [[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Mone%2C_Baroness_Mone)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/28/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-review-documentary-bbc), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2024/bbc-commission-documentary-series-telling-story-of-michelle-mone), [[4]](https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/bbc-riseandfall-michellemone-ann1)
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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2025/may/28/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-review-documentary-bbc> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2024/bbc-commission-documentary-series-telling-story-of-michelle-mone> - In December 2024, the BBC announced a two-part documentary titled 'The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone' for BBC Two, BBC Scotland, and iPlayer. The series explores the journey of Michelle Mone, from her beginnings in Glasgow's East End to establishing the lingerie brand Ultimo. It delves into her rise to prominence in the 1990s, her appointment as a baroness in 2015, and the subsequent controversies, including her involvement in the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The documentary features insights from friends, former colleagues, advisors, journalists, and lawyers who have been part of her story. Erica Jenkin, the director, expressed excitement about bringing Mone's multifaceted journey to life, highlighting its reflection on societal shifts in contemporary Britain. Simon Young, Head of Commissioning for History at the BBC, emphasized the importance of understanding the foundations of one of the most astonishing stories in recent British business history. The series is produced by Rogan Scotland and is set to air in 2025.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/25/michelle-mone-leading-entrepreneur-or-lucky-baroness> - An article from January 2024 examines Michelle Mone's career, contrasting her public image as a successful entrepreneur with the financial challenges faced by her company, Ultimo. Despite her claims of significant profits, company documents and a 2014 employment tribunal judgment suggest Ultimo was heading towards insolvency before being rescued by Sri Lankan manufacturer MAS Holdings. The piece also delves into personal aspects, including Mone's tumultuous marriage and the company's operational issues post-2011. The employment tribunal case highlighted concerns over workplace surveillance and management decisions following MAS's takeover. The article provides a nuanced view of Mone's business trajectory and personal life, questioning the narrative of her as a self-made millionaire.
4. <https://www.tvzoneuk.com/post/bbc-riseandfall-michellemone-ann1> - A news piece detailing the BBC's commissioning of a two-part documentary series titled 'The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone'. The series aims to explore Mone's journey from her entrepreneurial beginnings in the 1990s to her rise in the political sphere, culminating in the controversies surrounding the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The documentary will feature interviews with individuals who have been part of Mone's story, including friends, former colleagues, advisors, journalists, and lawyers. The article highlights the BBC's commitment to bringing this compelling and multifaceted story to the screen, reflecting on the societal shifts that have shaped contemporary Britain.
5. <https://www.inkl.com/news/bbc-reveals-details-of-new-series-on-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone> - An article reporting on the BBC's announcement of a new two-part documentary series titled 'The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone'. The series is set to examine Mone's rise as a lingerie entrepreneur, her elevation to the House of Lords, and her subsequent fall from grace due to the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The piece discusses the government's investigation into Mone's involvement with PPE Medpro and the National Crime Agency's pursuit of potential criminal charges. The article also highlights the BBC's collaboration with Rogan Scotland to bring this story to the screen, aiming to provide a comprehensive look at one of the most astonishing stories in recent British business history.
6. <https://newsvoice.info/article/page/dailyrecord/news/tv-documentary-michelle-mone-ppe-34536887> - A report on the viewership of the two-part documentary 'The Michelle Mone Scandal: Where Did Our Money Go?', which aired on Channel 5. The documentary attracted over 629,000 viewers and delved into Mone's involvement in the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. It covered allegations that Mone and her husband, Doug Barrowman, used their political connections to secure government contracts for PPE Medpro, which was later accused of supplying faulty equipment. The piece also touches upon the couple's assets being seized and their denials of any wrongdoing. The documentary features insights from various individuals, including Jo Maugham QC and Nadine Dorries, who comment on the scandal and its implications.
7. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle\_Mone,\_Baroness\_Mone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Mone%2C_Baroness_Mone) - The Wikipedia page for Michelle Mone, Baroness Mone, provides a comprehensive overview of her life and career. Born and raised in Glasgow's East End, Mone transitioned from a modelling career to establish the lingerie company MJM, which later launched Ultimo, a new type of push-up bra. The page details her rise to prominence in the 1990s, her appointment as a baroness in 2015, and the controversies surrounding her involvement in the PPE Medpro scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also covers her personal life, including her marriage to Doug Barrowman and the subsequent legal and financial challenges they faced. The page offers insights into Mone's business ventures, political career, and the various legal proceedings she has been involved in.