# Baroness Michelle Mone documentary exposes scandal and gender bias in rise and fall



Baroness Michelle Mone, often referred to as "Baroness Bra," remains an enigmatic figure in British public life, encapsulating both ambition and controversy. Her foray into the world of lingerie, most notably with her brand Ultimo, positioned her as a significant player in the fashion industry. At the heart of her ascent, however, is a complicated narrative marked by personal drama and public scrutiny, particularly surrounding her involvement in a scandal concerning government contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recent BBC documentary, "The Rise And Fall Of Michelle Mone," serves as a lens through which her tumultuous life is examined. Directed by Erika Jenkin, the two-part series gives an overview of Mone's journey from her roots in Glasgow's East End to the House of Lords, where she was appointed by then-Prime Minister David Cameron in 2015. Notably absent from the documentary are supportive voices from Mone's personal life; neither her current husband Doug Barrowman nor her former spouse Michael Mone agreed to offer interviews. Instead, the film predominantly features anonymous testimonies from former employees and the insights of Dr Ted Anders, Mone's American therapist.

The documentary does not shy away from Mone’s dark chapters, culminating in a stark confrontation with Laura Kuenssberg. The tension hinges on the accusations that Barrowman’s company, PPE Medpro, profited from government contracts worth £200 million, allegedly supplying substandard medical equipment. This scandal has cast a long shadow over Mone's reputation, with her name becoming synonymous with the more dubious aspects of pandemic procurement.

Mone's critics have not held back; her former PR spokesperson, Jack Irvine, expressed that her self-confidence often veered into delusion, labelling it "massive." He stated that collaborating with someone who struggles with honesty can be a significant challenge. Observations of Mone's character paint her as manipulative and self-obsessed, with critiques often steering towards her business style, which some suggest might receive more admiration had it been showcased by a male entrepreneur.

This gendered lens raises pertinent questions about societal perceptions; her ambition has drawn criticism that at times appears tainted by snobbery and chauvinism. As a teenager, Mone aspired to emulate Richard Branson, a figure noted for brash self-assuredness that often commands respect. Yet, her pursuit of this ambition has embroiled her in controversy, including fabrications about celebrity endorsements of her products.

The documentary offers a nuanced portrayal, steering clear of outright accusations of criminality while nonetheless depicting Mone unfavourably. It acknowledges that public resentment towards her may stem from a broader context of class and gender dynamics, particularly as she frequently references her challenging upbringing and her attempts to standardise her public persona through marketing her own creations.

Mone's journey, from her aspirations in the fashion industry to her entanglement in a scandal that compromised her standing, exemplifies a narrative characterised by both personal endeavour and public disillusionment. As one of Scotland's notable businesswomen, her story intertwines themes of ambition, perception, and the complexities of success in a modern context. The documentary encapsulates this duality, presenting both the glamour of her rise and the stark reality of her fall from grace.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14759419/bbc-Baroness-Bra-CHRISTOPHER-STEVENS-Rise-Fall-Michelle-Mone.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/rise-fall-michelle-mone-lying-baroness-ppe-scandal-b1127849.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14759419/bbc-Baroness-Bra-CHRISTOPHER-STEVENS-Rise-Fall-Michelle-Mone.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2024/bbc-commission-documentary-series-telling-story-of-michelle-mone), [[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Mone%2C_Baroness_Mone)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/25/michelle-mone-leading-entrepreneur-or-lucky-baroness), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/rise-fall-michelle-mone-lying-baroness-ppe-scandal-b1127849.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14759419/bbc-Baroness-Bra-CHRISTOPHER-STEVENS-Rise-Fall-Michelle-Mone.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/25/michelle-mone-leading-entrepreneur-or-lucky-baroness), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/business-33856079)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14759419/bbc-Baroness-Bra-CHRISTOPHER-STEVENS-Rise-Fall-Michelle-Mone.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.glasgowworld.com/news/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-5120142)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-14759419/bbc-Baroness-Bra-CHRISTOPHER-STEVENS-Rise-Fall-Michelle-Mone.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - 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 series titled 'The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone' for BBC Two and BBC Scotland. The series aims to explore the life of Michelle Mone, a Scottish entrepreneur who founded the lingerie company Ultimo and was appointed a life peer in 2015. The documentary will delve into her early life in Glasgow, her business ventures, and the controversies surrounding her involvement in a PPE scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The series 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, highlighting her rise from a modest background in Glasgow's East End to becoming a prominent businesswoman and life peer. The piece discusses the financial challenges faced by her company, Ultimo, and the involvement of Sri Lankan manufacturer MAS Holdings in rescuing the business. It also touches upon personal aspects of Mone's life, including her divorce and the impact of these events on her professional journey.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/rise-fall-michelle-mone-lying-baroness-ppe-scandal-b1127849.html> - This article provides an in-depth look at Michelle Mone's ascent from a challenging upbringing in Glasgow to becoming a successful entrepreneur and life peer. It details her business ventures, including the launch of Ultimo, and delves into personal events such as her divorce and subsequent relationships. The piece also covers the controversies surrounding her involvement in a PPE scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the public and legal challenges she faced.
5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle\_Mone,\_Baroness\_Mone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Mone%2C_Baroness_Mone) - The Wikipedia page on Michelle Mone offers a comprehensive overview of her life and career. Born in 1971 in Glasgow, Mone founded the lingerie company Ultimo and was appointed a life peer in 2015. The page details her early life, business ventures, media appearances, and awards. It also covers controversies, including her involvement in a PPE scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic, and her personal life, including her marriage and divorce.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-33856079> - In August 2015, Michelle Mone was appointed by the UK government to lead a review into encouraging start-ups in areas of high unemployment. The article discusses her background, including her upbringing in Glasgow's East End and the founding of Ultimo. It also highlights her previous business achievements and the government's initiative to leverage her experience in promoting entrepreneurship in disadvantaged communities.
7. <https://www.glasgowworld.com/news/the-rise-and-fall-of-michelle-mone-5120142> - This article discusses the BBC documentary series 'The Rise and Fall of Michelle Mone,' which explores the life of the Scottish entrepreneur. It covers her early life in Glasgow, the establishment of Ultimo, and her elevation to the House of Lords. The piece also delves into the controversies surrounding her involvement in a PPE scandal during the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of these events on her career and reputation.