

Basic Detail Report

John Paul Getty III

Date

1969-1979

Medium

gelatin silver print

Description

John Paul Getty III was the eldest of the four children of John Paul Getty, Jr. and the grandson of oil tycoon Jean Paul Getty. In early 1971, he was expelled from St. Georges after having painted the hallways of the school one night, taking inspiration from Charles Manson's *Helter Skelter*. Later that year, his stepmother died of a heroin overdose in Rome. While his father moved back to England, he remained in Italy, where he lived a bohemian life, frequented nightclubs, and took part in left-wing demonstrations. Endowed with a considerable artistic inclination, he reportedly earned a living making jewellery, selling paintings and appearing as an extra in movies. On 10 July 1973, Getty, then age 16, was kidnapped in the Piazza Farnese in Rome. A ransom note was received, demanding \$17 million in exchange for his safe return. When that ransom message arrived, some family members suspected the kidnapping was merely a ploy by the rebellious youngster as he had frequently joked about staging his own kidnapping to extract money from his frugal grandfather. He was blindfolded and imprisoned in a mountain hideout. A second demand was received, but had been delayed by an Italian postal strike. John Paul Getty, Jr. asked his father for the money, but was refused. In November 1973, an envelope containing a lock of hair and a human ear was delivered to a daily newspaper with a threat of further mutilation of Paul, unless \$3.2 million was paid: "This is Paul's ear. If we don't get some money within 10 days, then the other ear will arrive. In other words, he will arrive in

little bits." Eventually a ransom of \$2.2m was paid and Getty was released. The kidnappers were arrested., then the other ear will arrive. In other words, he will arrive in little bits."

Dimensions

Overall: 30.5 x 21.2 cm (12 x 8 3/8 in.)