

**Robert De Niro Hires Sex Providers Says Large British Newspaper**

# **Robert De Niro threatened his on-off lover in bid to force her to abort his secret 'daughter' during his cocaine-fuelled 1980s wild years - and his 'method acting' inspired John Belushi to inject the drugs which killed him**

- **De Niro started on-off affair with Helena Springs when he followed her car down a Los Angeles boulevard and asked her out to dinner**
- **She became pregnant and he 'threatened and intimidated' her in bid to convince her to abort their child**
- **Daughter, Nina, was born in 1982 but when she sued for maintenance 10 years later tests showed he was not the father**
- **New book reveals his last night with John Belushi and how he cried a few hours later when he was told of the comedian's 'speedball' overdose death**
- **Details private partying and cocaine use by Oscar-winner who has become property tycoon and one of Hollywood's wealthiest men**

By [Caroline Howe for MailOnline](#)

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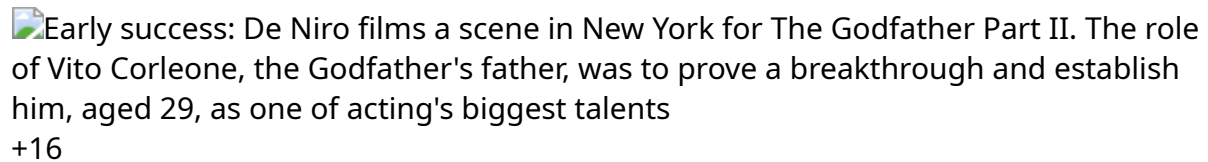
He was, it seemed, an actor at the height of his powers: an Oscar for his part in the Godfather, acclaim for Taxi Driver; New York, New York; and Raging Bull.

But in the early 1980s Robert De Niro was also at war with demons which threatened to consume him: cocaine, and womanizing.

Now a new book reveals De Niro's appetite for the drug-fuelled partying which was to kill his friend John Belushi, and how he wanted his lover to abort his daughter, Nina.

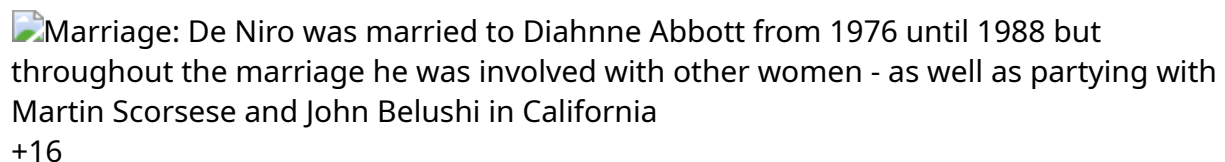
The book – De Niro: A Life, by author Shawn Levy, is published by Crown Archetype on 28 October.

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Early success: De Niro films a scene in New York for The Godfather Part II. The role of Vito Corleone, the Godfather's father, was to prove a breakthrough and establish him, aged 29, as one of acting's biggest talents  
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It discloses the torrid relationship which led to De Niro becoming a father for the third time with Helena Springs, a young singer whom he met by following her in his car down a boulevard in Los Angeles and demanding her phone number.

Their relationship was torrid and not exclusive – and ended in acrimony when she became pregnant.

In fact, reveals Levy, it was part of a pattern. 'There were always girls, starting from the time that he'd left his mother's house', writes Levy.

De Niro had grown up in the bohemian New York scene in Greenwich Village, his mother, Virginia Admiral - and known by that name after her brief two-year marriage to Robert De Niro,

Sr, was 'an independent businesswoman' who also framed pictures and made jewelry.

Robert De Niro, Sr. was an artist and regarded as a peer of - although not as successful as - Abstract Expressionist artists like Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline. He was also bisexual.

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Despite growing up in Greenwich Village in a hotbed of artistic and cultural change, the 1960s of flower power and Vietnam passed Bobby De Niro Jr by.

He played no part in the counter-culture, did not drop acid and never protested the war.


Instead he learned how to be an actor and at the same time, pursued - and caught - woman after woman.

Actresses he met in classes, in productions in clubs, showbiz bars and they were always gorgeous. 'He picked these incredibly strong girls, top chicks,' film producer Jonathan Taplin remembered.

But the affairs came with big drama. 'He'd fight with them all the time. They would always be in tears the next morning and he would buy them some perfume'.

None of the relationships lasted very long because he was so committed to his work ethic - along with his 'thin skin and quick temper'.


One night, De Niro was stood up by an actress he had invited to a Thanksgiving dinner party thrown by Shelley Winters for her starving theatrical waifs.

 Partying in private: A rare picture of De Niro enjoying himself in public as he toasts his Oscar for the Godfather Part II. Unlike other stars, he was discreet his enjoyment of drink and drugs, making sure that partying was done in private with trusted friends

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 Show of togetherness: Robert De Niro photographed with his wife Diahnne Abbott in 1982, the year he was cheating on her with Helena Springs. The couple were photographed in Paris but De Niro's pursuit of women had been going on for many years and they were to divorce in  
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De Niro's date floated in by the time they were having dessert and casually said: 'Oh, hi Bobby...'

'He went into the bedroom and pounded the headboard with his fist. He was crying. He never talked to her again,' Shelley stated.

He felt jealousy if he thought one of his girlfriends was getting too much attention from another man. He was jealous and possessive.

A romance was sparked between the actor and Sally Kirkland when they were studying at the Actors Studio together in New



York.


He had a lingering affair with actress, model Carole Mallory, who was to become Norman Mailer's long-time lover.

He followed beautiful women down the street in his car until they stopped and took his phone number.

This was how he met Helena Springs, a singer, by following her down San Vicente Boulevard in Los Angeles in his convertible.


'I'd go fast, he'd go fast. I'd slow down, he'd slow down. This asshole kept following me. I didn't even know him. Finally he put his hands in a prayer position and said, 'Pull over'. So I stopped and he said, 'Can we have lunch?'

Springs, 22 at the time, was a backing singer for Bob Dylan, Bette Midler and Elton John. When she realized who this man was, she agreed to go to dinner which led to spending the night together.

Gonzo comedian: John Belushi, pictured center appearing on Saturday Night Live in March 1980, established himself as one of the funniest and most outrageous comics of the early 1980s. But he was also a ferocious partygoer, spending time with De Niro as they shared a love of cocaine  
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They fell into a non-exclusive relationship over the next few year and Springs became pregnant twice.

The first pregnancy, she aborted without telling the actor. In late 1981, pregnant again, she now wanted this baby and when she told De Niro, that set him off 'on what she described as a series of ugly and intimidating conversations and encounters aimed at getting her to terminate the pregnancy'.

'It was mental abuse,' Springs said, and went ahead with her plans to carry the baby.

She gave birth to a baby girl on July 1, 1982, named Nina. Springs stated that the actor gave her \$50,000 to help with the baby's care and even help her set up the baby's room but that was it.

'He drew the line at providing her with his medical history or a blood sample, fearing that she didn't merely want to be able to fill in the gaps in the baby's medical records, as she said, but rather that she was after more money,' writes Levy.

Springs did not pursue De Niro's help further because of her own low self-esteem.

'Black women are used to being courted by handsome, famous, rich white guys. So they don't say no to whatever the man wants,' she said.

The truth is, Bobby treated people badly if he decided they weren't up to snuff  
Film director Peter Bogdanovich

De Niro wouldn't see the baby for three years. But it wasn't the last word from Helena.

In August 1992, De Niro received a letter from Marvin Mitchelson, celebrity lawyers to the stars in Hollywood .

Springs was now Helena Lisandrello and wanted the star of 'Raging Bull' and 'Godfather' to pay child support for his daughter, now ten years old.

The actor finally submitted to that blood test which showed him not to be the biological father.

Helena contended he owed the child money because he had told Nina he was her father. De Niro no longer contributed to Nina's upbringing after 1992.

The contentious relationship with Springs was not the end of his womanizing – or his anger towards those women with whom he came into conflict.

It had long been an issue. When Cybill Shepard came to New York to prepare for acting in *Taxi Driver*, De Niro agreed to work with her for several days at the St. Regis Hotel hoping to improve her acting skills.

‘There was an enormous amount of chemistry between De Niro and me’, Cybill stated. ‘We didn’t act on it... De Niro asked me out. It was a great compliment. Years later I said, ‘Can you believe I turned him down?’

Film director Peter Bogdanovich, who fell in love with Cybill, claimed that De Niro developed a loathing for Shepherd after she rejected him.

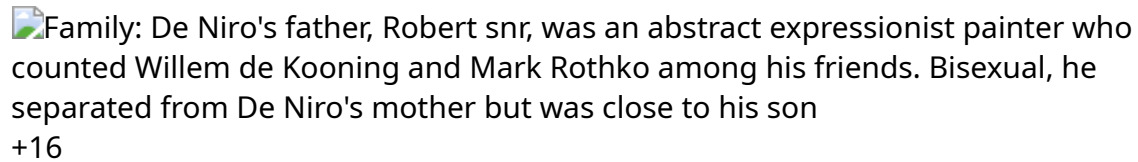
‘He treated Cybill like a pile of dogs\*\*\*’. ‘It was horrendous to watch. The truth is, Bobby treated people badly if he decided they weren’t up to snuff.’

De Niro was too obvious with his frustration with the actress cringing at her line readings. But he treated Jodie Foster, only 13 at the time, like a queen.

De Niro sought his own sources of praise and attention, making friends with film director Martin Scorsese to work on the film *'Mean Streets'*, in the early 1970s after seeing him around his New York neighborhood for years.

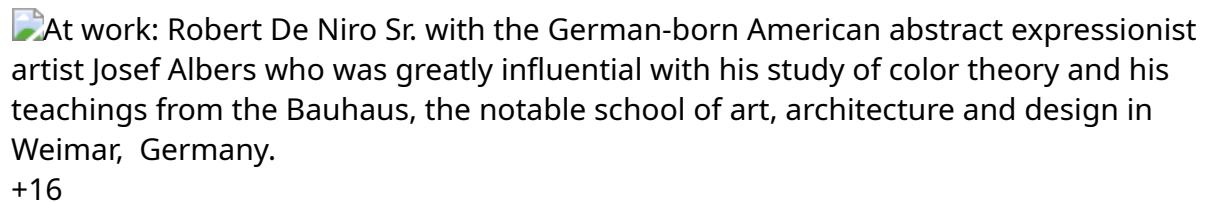
He swallowed the director up in his need for constant attention and need to talk about his character for ten hours non-stop.

Scorsese and DeNiro became good friends and understood each other. But they also both loved cocaine.

Family: De Niro's father, Robert snr, was an abstract expressionist painter who counted Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko among his friends. Bisexual, he separated from De Niro's mother but was close to his son  
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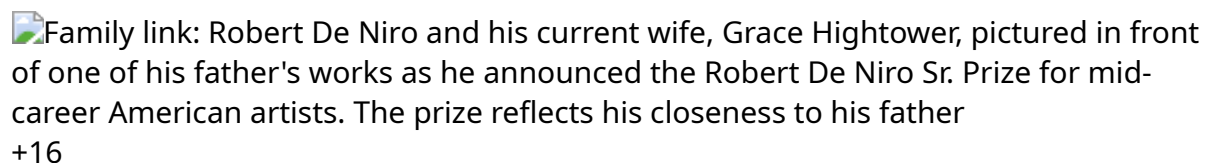
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Family link: Robert De Niro and his current wife, Grace Hightower, pictured in front of one of his father's works as he announced the Robert De Niro Sr. Prize for mid-career American artists. The prize reflects his closeness to his father

Both he and De Niro were partying with cocaine and De Niro was living between New York and Hollywood, keeping his wife, Diahnne Abbott in a house in Brentwood while he stayed at the Chateau Marmont - the fabled hotel on Sunset Boulevard, populated by celebrities and where anything went.

There he was to become involved in a scene which ended in the tragedy of John Belushi's death from drugs.

A seemingly unlikely pair, the gonzo comedian and De Niro were spending time together in a cocaine-fueled haze in the early 1980s in New York and Los Angeles.

They both loved the late nightlife, Marlon Brando movies - and cocaine.

In New York, De Niro visited Belushi at his downtown apartment where the pair partied. In Los Angeles, the meeting ground was Belushi was ensconced in a bungalow for the ultimate wild partying privacy and De Niro in a suite in the hotel's main building where he carried on his own partying with several women, alcohol and cocaine.

De Niro telephoned Belushi on the night of March 4th, 1982, to join him and actor pal Harry Dean Stanton at On the Rox, an infamous nightclub on the Sunset Strip where the best musicians drifted through and played in the company of boozing movie stars and celebrities.

Belushi that night was imitating De Niro's 'famed technique of immersing himself completely in his roles'.

### **CHATEAU MARMONT: THE HOLLYWOOD PARTY PALACE**

When it opened its doors in 1929, the Chateau Marmont promised apartments with 'quiet and privacy'.

But two years later, struck by the Depression, it became a hotel - and started offering only one of those qualities: privacy.

In 1939, Columbia Pictures' founder Harry Cohn offered pithy advice to his stars: 'If you must get into trouble, do it at the Chateau Marmont.'

Greta Garbo spent weeks locked in seclusion in its rooms, Errol Flynn brought each of his wives to it and Led Zeppelin rode their motorcycles in the lobby.

By the 1980s it was known as the place to do drugs with discretion in Hollywood. If the hotel was not sufficiently discreet, the cottages and bungalows in its grounds were on offer.

It was in Bungalow Three that John Belushi died from a 'speedball' - a combination of heroin and cocaine which injected into his arm.

His death shocked the public but hardly surprised those who knew what was happening behind the mock-French exterior.

The hotel's response was simple: it increased security in case his death attracted more gatecrashers.

DeNiro always played edgy movie roles, obsessively studying the character he would play until he became the character - from the Vietnam Vet Travis Bickle in Taxi Driver, the madman Max Cady in Cape Fear, boxing champ Jake LaMotta in Raging Bull, Michael, the leader of the three ex-war vets in The Deer Hunter, gangster Al Capone in The Untouchables.

Belushi was simply following his friend's method: the comedian wanted to play a punk rock musician in a new movie and needed to know what heroin, favored by punk rockers, was all about. He was rehearsing the scene when he overdosed.

Getting no answer, Harry Dean and De Niro checked out Belushi's bungalow and found him loaded on heroin and cocaine

in the company of Cathy Smith, a woman who drifted through the music business and lives of musicians.

Belushi suggested De Niro come back after On the Rox had closed.

That would be the last time De Niro would see his friend alive.

When he couldn't reach him through the hotel switchboard in the morning, the hotel manager told him, 'There is a problem. It is bad. It's really bad'. DeNiro started to cry.


It was all over the media that De Niro had been with Belushi earlier in the evening but he wasn't the only one.

Robin Williams was appearing at the Comedy Store, the daddy of all the comedy stages, and he was looking for De Niro and Belushi for late night playtime.

He found De Niro in his hotel room but occupied with women so Robin visited Belushi alone, 'He, too was creeped out by Smith and by the depressing and even sinister vibe in the room' but hung out for a while before leaving.

De Niro made another late visit to the bungalow, 'let himself in, helped himself to a little bit of the cocaine displayed on a table, and left again'.

De Niro was subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury after Belushi's death but was on location in Italy and gave his testimony over the telephone.

 Family: De Niro and his wife Grace Hightower at the opening night of the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival, which he founded. His property empire around southern


Manhattan has made him worth an estimated \$350 million

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Red carpet: Robert De Niro on the red carpet at 2013's Oscars with his wife Grace Hightower. He now says that it is not acting acclaim but having his six children around him which makes him happy

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In Rome, he immersed himself right back into his movie role and his life rolled on.

His taste for partying was unchanged but he liked to do it in private and was rumoured to be involved with Bette Midler and Nicaraguan film and television actress Barbara Carrera while still married to actress Diahnne Abbott who preferred partying publicly in clubs. That marriage fell apart in 1988.

After many affairs and romances, the actor married actress Grace Hightower in 1997 and despite separations, the couple have been able to keep the marriage together.

At the same time, he has become exceptionally wealthy even by Hollywood's standards: he has amassed a real estate empire around southern Manhattan, with his net worth estimated to be some \$310 million in 2014.

A hotel, apartment buildings and the Tribeca Film Festival are among his property and business empire.