Hollywood Golightly

A former party girl reveals the myth behind the 90210 zip code

February 1, 1998 By Mark Alpert

I went to all the parties, did all the drugs and slept with whoever I wanted to sleep with," says former party girl Lauren Kletter. "I lived life for the moment."

This was 1980s Hollywood, where Kletter was a Beverly Hills bookkeeper by day, working at an accounting firm that catered to the show-biz set—her entrée into the VIP party scene. Soon she was sharing men with porn publisher Larry Flynt's late wife, Althea, who died of AIDS in 1987. Anyone who saw *The People vs. Larry Flynt* won't be surprised that the Flynts' marriage was wide open, but Kletter was looking for more than a series of flings. "Althea's toys were my boyfriends," she says. "These guys would get a suite at the Century Plaza Hotel and party there for days. The cocaine was everywhere—bricks of it."

By the end of the decade, Kletter had cleaned up her act. She gave up drugs and became a Hollywood Hills homeowner, with an eye toward raising a family.

Then she tested positive for HIV.

"I wasn't surprised. I knew my past," she says, referring to the many men and syringes from which she might have contracted the virus. Some of her friends from her Hollywood high life ostracized her after she revealed her diagnosis. Kletter returned to sex and rock 'n' roll, though she steered clear of drugs. She insisted that her lovers—tourists and surfer dudes in Mexico's Baja California—wear condoms.

Kletter remained asymptomatic until 1994, when her troubles began with a severe HIV-related eye infection that was initially misdiagnosed as conjunctivitis. As her health crumbled, so did her life: She lost her job, her house, and then her sanity. In 1995, she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Los Angeles. "I cracked, just like the main character in the movie *Shine*," says Kletter, 42. "When I went into that hospital I thought I'd never get out."

When she finally did, Kletter reluctantly turned to her relatives for help. Though she had rebelliously left her middle-class family behind in the suburbs of Detroit two decades earlier, Kletter went home. But her mother's arms weren't wide open for long: After a few weeks, she threw her daughter out and went so far as to file a restraining order against her. From a Denny's restaurant, Kletter called her brother in the wealthy suburban community of Scarsdale, New York,

and he invited her to live with him.

Though her current CD4 count is down to 70 and her viral load up to 93,000, Kletter's energy makes it easy to see why she was the life of the party. And she still likes the idea of making a man's head turn— a brief stint on Crixivan ended when her weight ballooned. "My doctor said, 'I'm not worried about you gaining weight,'" Kletter says. "I told him, 'It may not bother you, but you're not sleeping with me.'"

These days, the former Beverly Hills bon vivant has her own apartment, a part-time job at a hotel reservations agency and an active involvement in her local Presbyterian church. "I've had my fill of Hollywood," she says. "I've gotten more support in Scarsdale than anywhere else."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Hollywood-Golightly-1588-9131