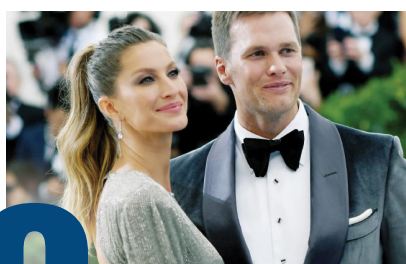
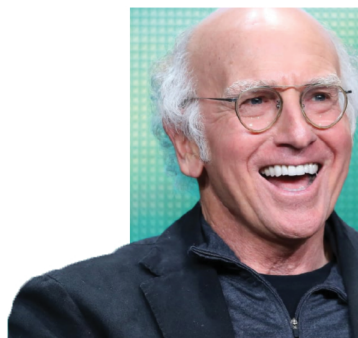
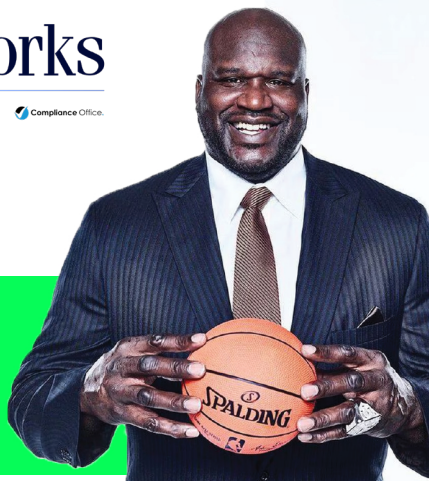


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# Crypto celebs

Those who fell for crypto


And the one who didn't.

It's not hard to understand the initial appeal of cryptocurrencies. By removing intermediaries, the digital currencies based on computer networks heralded a new era of economic activity that didn't require stodgy banks or heavy regulations and represented a democratisation of access to money in a way that was not possible before.

For crypto believers, investing in cryptocurrency was also a way to earn high returns while supporting what they saw as the future of technology. It didn't hurt that so many celebrities were soon recruited or jumped on the crypto bandwagon. This alliance helped expand the cryptocurrency world and encouraged even more people to invest in digital currencies, many of whom were not fully aware that - despite the hype and short term highs - they were entering a highly volatile, loosely regulated world that was prone to money laundering, scams and corruption.

The stunning collapse of crypto exchange FTX, and other smaller crypto currencies, opened up many eyes to the capricious, unreliable and unstable side of crypto. And with so much money lost, a lot of people, including regulators, are taking a hard look at the celebrities who were heavily promoting a variety of digital currencies. What was behind their hype? Did they believe what they were hawking? For a time, when crypto's prices were shooting up, no one bothered asking those questions. But now, in the cold, hard wake of the fall of so many digital currencies and billions of dollars being lost, the question of celebrity manipulation and fraud is being seriously considered.

We take a look here at some of those celebrities as well as the one who chose to walk away from crypto. We can't possibly speak to why each of them did what they did but, as celebrities in the public eye, their actions have consequences and exploring those actions helps to understand their full impact - and, maybe, help protect a more discerning public from falling prey to the next "big thing" and possibly becoming victims of financial crime.

A photograph of Tom Brady and Giselle Bündchen at a formal event. Tom is wearing a grey tuxedo with a black bow tie, and Giselle is wearing a white sequined dress. They are both smiling and looking towards the right. The background is blurred, showing other people in formal attire.

# Tom Brady and Giselle Bündchen

Even though the pair are no longer together, the two were once united in promoting FTX, the cryptocurrency founded by Sam Bankman-Fried that famously imploded. Tom served as an “ambassador” for FTX and appeared at the company’s conference in the Bahamas and in TV commercials that promoted the exchange as “the most trusted” institution in the admittedly loosely regulated crypto world. The endorsement agreement Brady signed in 2021 with FTX paid him \$30 million, which consisted almost entirely of FTX stock. Gisele served as FTX’s Environmental & Social Initiatives Advisor and was paid \$18 million in FTX stock. They are both being sued by a group of FTX customers who are seeking compensation from the celebrities who endorsed the exchange.

Source: Vanity Fair

**Sued!**

A close-up portrait of Kim Kardashian with dark, wavy hair pulled back, wearing a white top. The background is a solid blue color with a yellow triangle in the top right corner. A dark blue border frames the top and right sides of the image.

# Kim Kardashian

At the height of the cryptocurrency craze, in June 2021, Kardashian promoted Ethereum Max, a brand-new token, on her Instagram page. She said she was eager to share with her 225 million followers that her friends told her they were reducing supply to give “back to the entire E-Max community.” Of course, her “friends” paid Kardashian to promote the cryptocurrency, which regulators said was not adequately disclosed. She was fined \$1.3 million by the SEC for hyping the cryptocurrency.

Source: Yahoo

**Fined!**

A portrait of Paris Hilton with long, straight blonde hair, smiling. She is wearing a white top with a blue and green floral pattern. The background is a blurred cityscape.

# Paris Hilton

Hilton gushed early and often about crypto and invested in a number of projects, including NFTs (non-fungible tokens). She is partly credited with helping to bring a mainstream audience to the world of digital currencies. Recently a class action lawsuit was filed that alleges that Hilton among others, conspired to artificially inflate the price of Bored Ape NFTs and enrich themselves, the crypto payments company they used to get the apes, MoonPay, and the company that made the Bored Apes, Yuga Labs.

Source: Hello Magazine

**Sued!**



# Snoop Dogg

Snoop Dogg became known in the cryptocurrency industry for being one of the biggest NFT collectors. He was identified as the man behind the famous but pseudonymous NFT Collector Cozomo de' Medici, making him the owner of millions of dollars in NFTs. He was also involved in promoting the growth of Yuga Labs and partnered with cryptocurrency casino Roobet.

Source: AP

**Crypto  
promoter!**

A close-up portrait of Lindsay Lohan with long, wavy, reddish-brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a light blue top, a delicate necklace with a small pendant, and a diamond stud earring. The image is framed by a blue border.

# Lindsay Lohan

Lohan promoted cryptocurrency TRX on her social media, saying its “super fast and 0 fee.” But, according to the SEC, she received \$10,000 to post and was charged with illegally promoting crypto assets by not disclosing that she was being paid. Lohan paid \$400K to settle the charges without admitting guilt.

Source: Vanity Fair

**Settled  
with  
the SEC!**

A portrait of Jake Paul, a young man with blonde, wavy hair, wearing a light green bomber jacket over a white collared shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is blue with a large yellow 'X' and some colorful, abstract shapes.

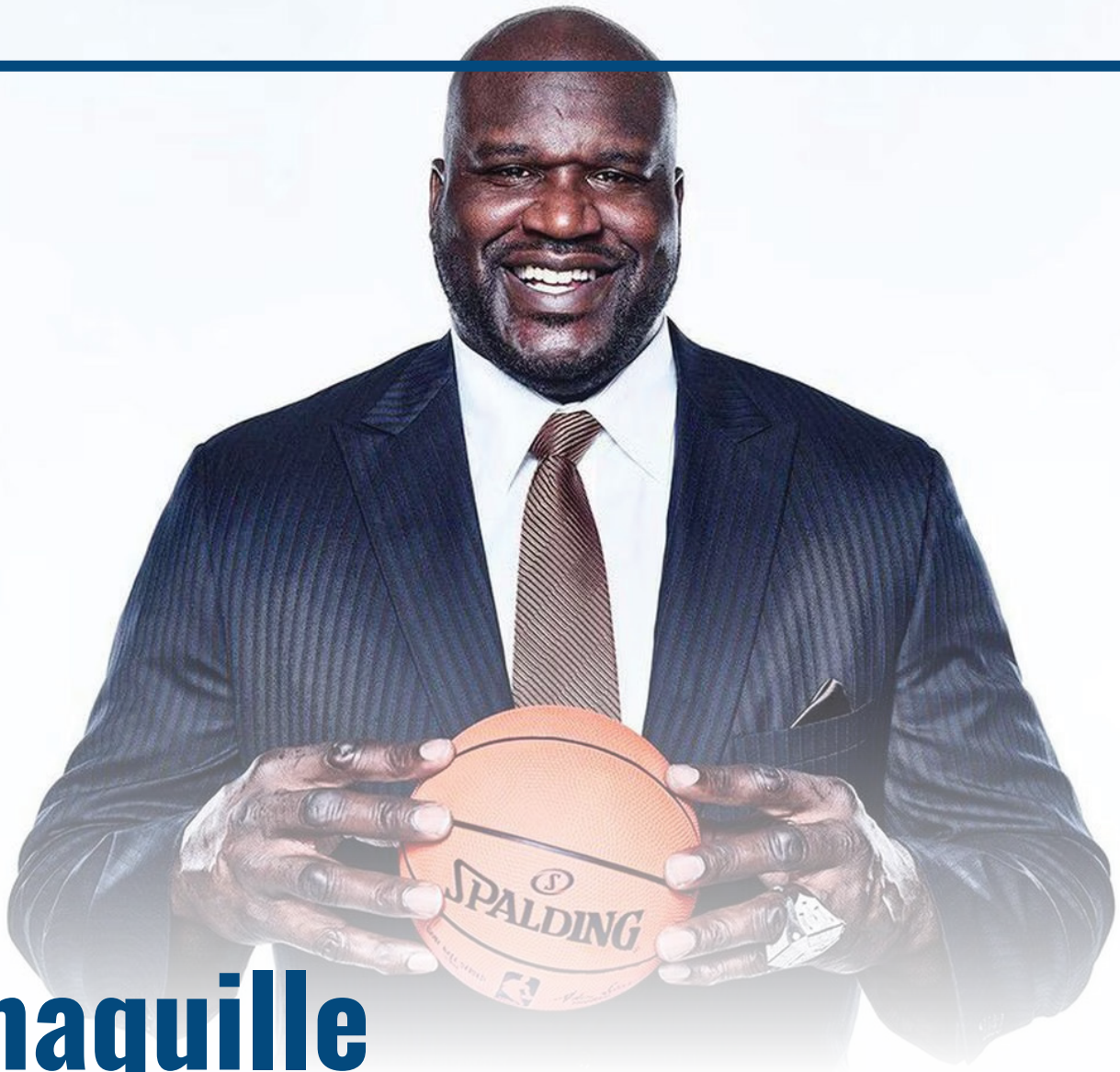
# Jake Paul

Paul, a social media influencer and boxer, also promoted cryptocurrency TRX to his 3.8 million Twitter followers in exchange for crypto assets valued at \$25,019. The SEC charged Paul with illegally promoting crypto assets by not disclosing that he was being paid. Paul also paid \$400K to settle the charges without admitting guilt.

Source: Seventeen Magazine

**Settled  
with  
the SEC!**





# Shaquille O'Neal

The Shaq was involved in various cryptocurrency projects and launched the Astrals Project, a virtual world, in which he promoted his Astrals NFTs on his various social media accounts. That included urging investors to “hop on the wave before it’s too late” and stating that “there will only ever be 50 of these in existence.” The NFTs could only be bought by bidding on Astral tokens. He is now being sued by investors for violating security laws by selling unregistered tokens. He is also being sued in a separate lawsuit for promoting FTX.

Source: AL.com

**Sued!  
(Twice!)**



# Matt Damon

Damon compared the advent of virtual money to the development of aviation and spaceflight in a critically panned but widely seen Crypto.com ad and briefly became the face of cryptocurrencies. He later said that his non profit, Water.org, was struggling and he did the commercial in an attempt to raise money for it. The SEC has not brought charges against him for his crypto promotion.

Source: Variety

**Crypto  
promoter!**




# Gwyneth Paltrow

Paltrow gave away \$500K in Bitcoin in 2021 as part of her holiday gift giving. She specifically wanted to get women excited about cryptocurrencies. At a women-centred Zoom summit in 2022, Paltrow encouraged thousands of female viewers to break into the traditionally male-dominated world of cryptocurrency and NFTs. “We have watched a lot of these bros get together and earn a lot of money. We deserve to be in this space just as much,” noted Paltrow.

Source: Britannica

**Crypto promoter!**

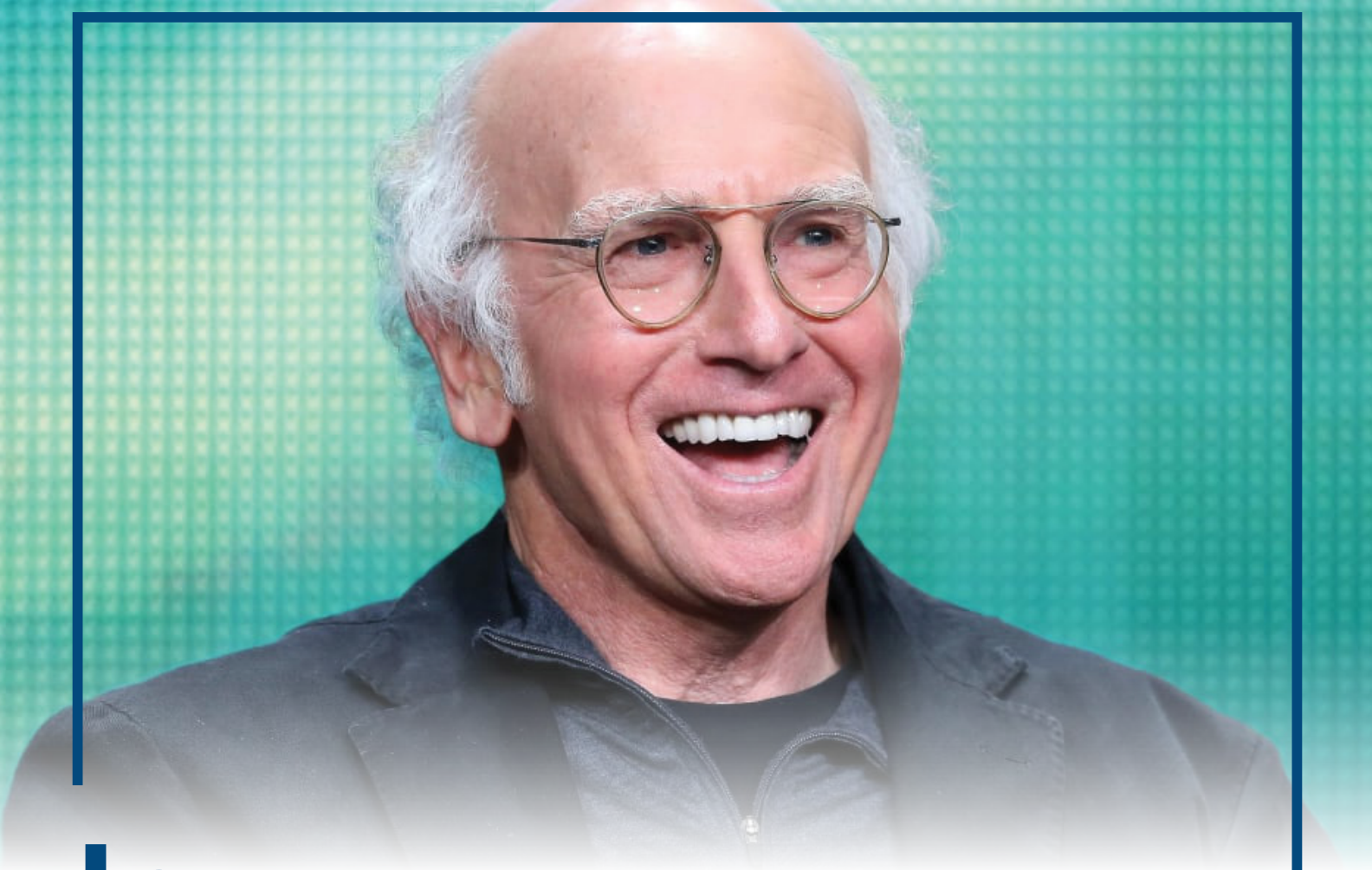
A close-up portrait of Naomi Osaka, a tennis player, wearing a black and white visor and a dark athletic top with white stripes on the shoulder. She has curly hair and is looking slightly to the right with a neutral expression. The image is framed by a blue border.

# Naomi Osaka

Osaka, the tennis star, became a global ambassador for FTX in March 2022, in a deal that gave Osaka an equity stake in the company as well as compensation payments in crypto. Osaka wore an FTX patch during her tennis matches. The contract also involved purpose-driven elements centred on attracting more female users to FTX's platform. Osaka was named a defendant in the lawsuit filed by FTX investors.

Source: Sky Sports

**Sued!**




# Larry David

In a now famous Superbowl ad in 2022, David promoted FTX by demonstrating how throughout history he resisted technological and political innovations. He is shown disparaging the lightbulb, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the creation of the Walkman. Ultimately, he declines an offer to get involved in FTX's crypto exchange. The accompanying text is, "Don't be like Larry. Don't miss out on the next big thing." David is now being sued in a class action lawsuit for promoting the failed cryptocurrency exchange.

Source: Parade

Sued!



# Taylor Swift, Cryptocurrency hero

In 2021, in the height of the crypto craze, Taylor Swift was approached about inking a sponsorship deal with FTX that could have paid her as much as \$100 million. It would have involved a number of FTX promotions including selling tickets as non-fungible tokens (NFTs) to her fans. But during deal discussions, Swift is reported to have questioned the viability of the cryptocurrency.

Swift was one of only a few celebrities to question the exchange, **according to Adam Moskowitz**, the lawyer handling a class action lawsuit against celebrity FTX promoters.

“In our discovery, Taylor Swift actually asked them, 'Can you tell me that these are not unregistered securities?’” said Moskowitz.

Moskowitz said that unlike other celebrities who didn't do their due diligence, Swift pulled out of the agreement and never promoted the now-bankrupt FTX.

Reports **have surfaced** that Swift allegedly agreed to the deal with FTX after months of discussion but that FTX executives pulled out of the deal. Swift has not publicly commented but the **fact remains that:**

- 1.** No other stories have emerged about celebrities questioning the validity of a cryptocurrency
- 2.** She did not enter into a partnership with the crypto exchange

**That makes her our cryptocurrency hero.**

Source: USA Today

**Crypto  
hero!**

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