

# MY HUNT FOR A SERIAL KILLER

**Exclusive** One Woman's Crusade to Track Down the Grim Sleeper

# People

March 7, 2016

**NEVER  
BEFORE  
SEEN  
PHOTOS!**

## Elizabeth Taylor **HER HIDDEN LIFE**

Intimate Secrets  
from a Surprising  
New Book



**BACHELORETTE  
EXCLUSIVE**

**Emily Maynard**  
LOVE AT LAST—  
AFTER TRAGEDY  
& AN OVERDOSE



**Kim in Crisis**  
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ELIZABETH  
TAYLOR

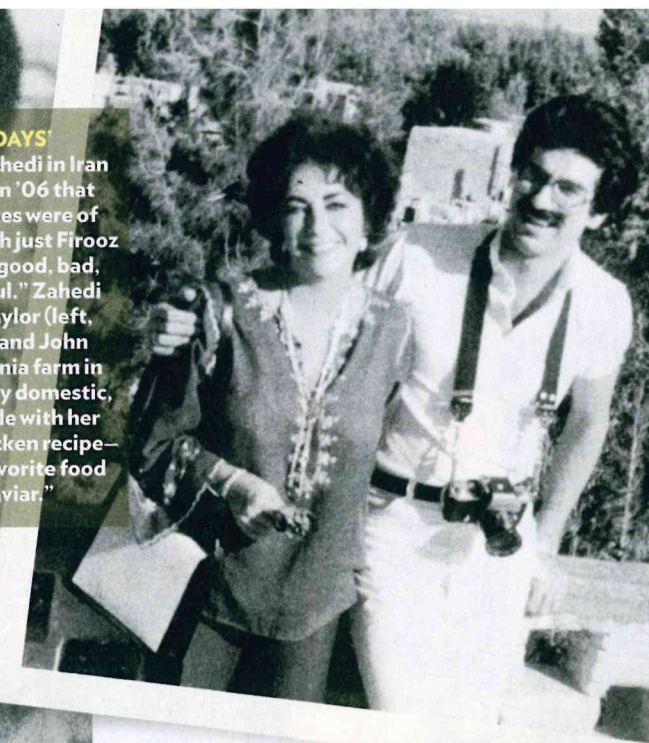
# Inside Her Private World

IN A NEW BOOK, PHOTOGRAPHER FIROOZ ZAHEDI SHARES MEMORIES AND NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN PHOTOS OF THE WOMAN BEHIND THE GLAMOUR: HIS FUNNY, GENEROUS, DOWN-TO-EARTH FRIEND



#### 'HAPPY DAYS'

Taylor (with Zahedi in Iran in '76) wrote in '06 that Zahedi's images were of "happy days with just Firooz and me being good, bad, excited, playful." Zahedi writes that Taylor (left, at sixth husband John Warner's Virginia farm in '77) was not very domestic, but was capable with her mom's fried chicken recipe— "Elizabeth's favorite food next to caviar."



**S**he owned scores of precious gems and had the world's most coveted men wrapped around her little finger. But on the long-ago summer day when Elizabeth Taylor was visiting Andy Warhol's Montauk, N.Y., beach house and decided to head into town, she had no need of car and driver. "Let's hitchhike!" Taylor suggested to her friend, photographer Firooz Zahedi. Recalling the preposterous scene from 1976 in his new photographic memoir *My Elizabeth*, Zahedi describes the Hollywood legend, unrecognizable in a T-shirt and bell-bottom jeans, on the side of a country road with her thumb out. Soon enough Taylor and Zahedi were in the back of a pickup truck, with the giggling movie star boasting, "See! It wasn't that hard, now was it?"

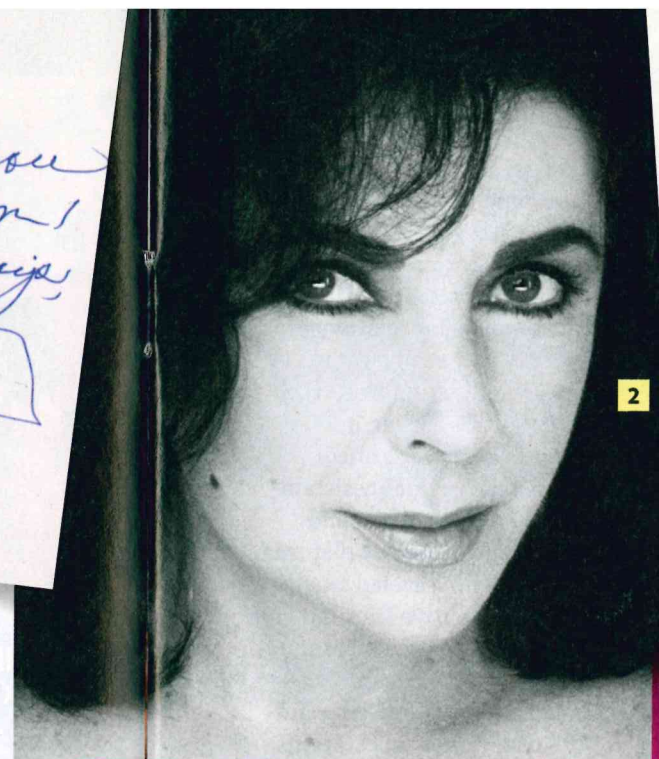
Hitchhiker, hippie, humanitarian and fry cook: *That's* the Elizabeth Taylor Zahedi saw—not only through his 35-mm. lens but through a 35-year friendship that began when Henry Kissinger tried playing Cupid for Taylor (unsuccessfully, with Zahedi's diplomat cousin) and spanned the latter half of the screen legend's life. Now, on the five-year anniversary of Taylor's death at age 79, Zahedi is publishing *My Elizabeth*, his intimate portfolio of Taylor's off-

FIROOZ ZAHEDI/AMY ELIZABETH/UTLITTERATI INCORPORATED; INSET: ARTHUR BRUCKEL/AMY ELIZABETH/UTLITTERATI INCORPORATED





*Marling Firooz*  
*I love you*  
*with a passion!*  
*Love always,*  
*Elizabeth*



#### ICON, ACTIVIST, FRIEND

**1.** Taylor always sent handwritten thank-you notes and birthday greetings, Zahedi recalls. "As she grew weak towards the end, the notes were typed for her, but they never stopped coming."  
**2.** Taylor (ca. 1997 with her three Academy Awards) could be very silly and "laugh her head off," says Zahedi. Once she took up the cause of AIDS patients, "she lost interest in wanting to win another Oscar. She was over that."  
**3.** Taylor's Maltese, Sugar (in Cannes in 1993), traveled the world with her. "I love that photo of Elizabeth dozing. She is so totally in peace," says Zahedi.

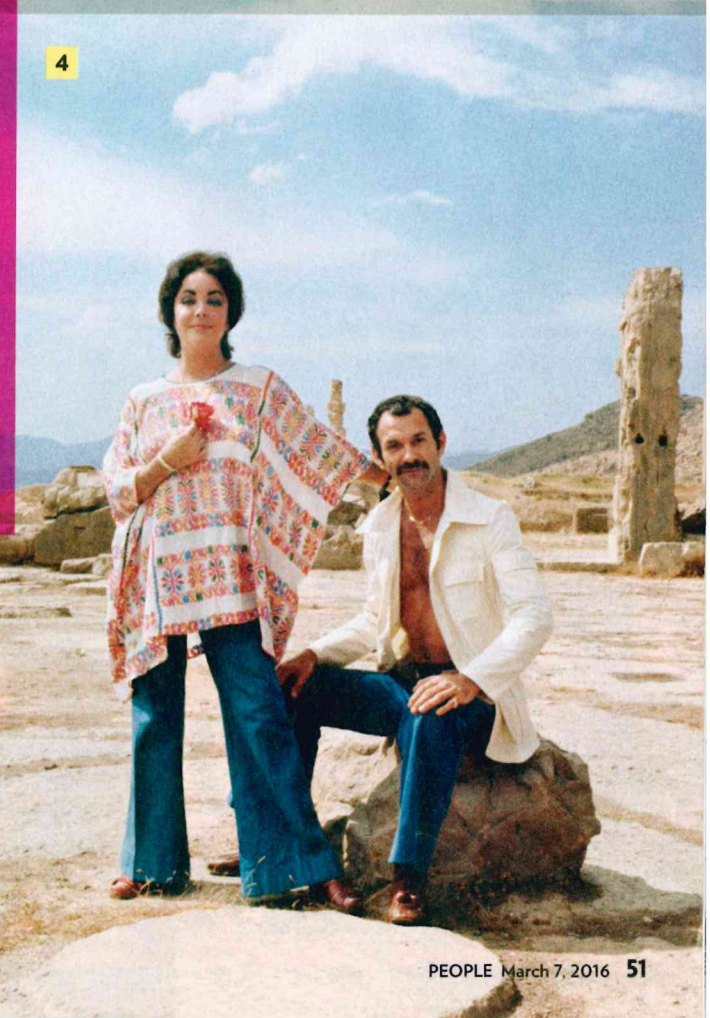
screen life, to benefit the Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation (ETAf.org) that was her final passion. The book, which contains many never-before-published photos, opens a window onto the woman behind the movie marquees, husbands, glamour and jewels. "She didn't give a damn about looking camera-ready," says Zahedi, 66. "She was very low-key, very hippie, very sweet. And maternal too—like your fantasy mother, the one who lets you do fun things."

Although Taylor's four children grew up wary of press intrusions—"She taught us early on to not pay any attention to [tabloids]," her son Christopher Wilding, now 61, told *People* in 2013—her family, including her granddaughter Laela Wilding, welcomes Zahedi's book of memories that are so like their own. "With Grandma, our favorite thing to do was to stay in bed together, just snuggling and chatting and eating lunch and watching movies," Laela, 44, one of the star's 10 grandchildren, tells *People* in a rare interview. She and Taylor would talk about boys, play dress-up and browse "Grandma's" jewelry closet, home of the legendary 33-carat Krupp diamond from fifth husband Richard Burton, whom she married twice. "I knew she was famous, but when I was with her, she was larger than life in the most wonderful way—fun and funny and very accepting," says Laela. She and several of Taylor's other grandchildren carry on her work with ETAf



**THE REAL DEAL**  
**1.** On their 1976 tour of Iran, Taylor was "mesmerized" by the Persian fabrics, says Zahedi, and accessorized them with a pendant from Richard Burton.  
**2.** In 1992, at age 60.  
**3.** "She was always happiest when her children came to visit," writes Zahedi of Taylor (at husband John Warner's farm with her daughter Liza in the late '70s).  
**4.** Taylor's hairdresser and personal assistant Arthur Bruckel (in *Persepolis*) tagged along on the '76 tour of Iran.  
**5.** Pals at Warhol's Montauk, N.Y., home (in '76) didn't expect Taylor to join their softball game, Zahedi recalls. "She proved them wrong by picking up a bat, which was nearly her own height, whacking the ball really hard and racing to first base with a triumphant smile."

**'She had her own style of dressing and getting made up, and whether people found it stylish or not she didn't give a damn'**  
 —FIROOZ ZAHEDI







1

#### LOVE AND LAUGHTER

1. "I remember Mom fixing those flowers in my hair and setting such a warm, loving, fiery tone for the evening," says Aileen Getty (at the 1980 party for her engagement to Elizabeth's son Christopher Wilding; they divorced in 1989).

2. When Taylor (here in '96) "was in her mid 40s, they were not coming to her anymore with good roles," Zahedi says. "It was a tough period for her."

3. Taylor (in '02) loved to entertain in her Bel Air backyard. "There was always music playing. Here a song came on that she liked, so she started dancing for the camera."



2



3

(and will travel to Washington, D.C., to attend AIDSWatch on Feb. 29), which became Taylor's true calling when the AIDS epidemic first hit in the 1980s. "She wanted to take care of others, and that motherly energy infused all of her relationships," says Laela. "She really wanted to break down the stigma of AIDS."

Several years earlier, in 1976, Taylor, then 44, and Zahedi, a former ambassador's assistant 17 years her junior, met and soon became a playful, platonic twosome who traveled together through his native Iran, her Hollywood home turf, Washington, D.C., and more. Taylor encouraged Zahedi to chuck his family's traditional expectations and make a career of photography, starting as her personal photographer on the set of *A Little Night Music*. "She basically saved my life," he says. She was casual, easygoing and quick to laugh—even at aging. "It wasn't her looks that she worried about, it was her health," he adds.

The pair's colorful story might have included romance if only Zahedi hadn't so fiercely denied rumors in 2006 that he was to be husband No. 9. "That upset her because I said older women shouldn't marry younger men," says Zahedi now. "There is always this ridicule about older actresses . . . and I didn't want her to be ridiculed again." The last time he spoke to Taylor before her death in March 2011, they were mulling a Christmas Eve outing. Zahedi joked about running off to a Vegas wedding chapel. "And she gave me one of those cackling laughs of hers and said, 'No way, Buster.' Like, you had your chance—and you blew it."

By Sandra Sobieraj Westfall.  
Reporting by Liz McNeil



#### MY ELIZABETH

Taylor approved of Zahedi's book and wrote a foreword, but at the time "publishers said they were interested in a younger Elizabeth Taylor," he says.