

# TURNING POINT

*Inspiring Portraits of America's Celebrities  
by Glenn Plaskin*



*Glenn Plaskin speaks with Nancy Reagan during her last White House interview.*

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## LIZ FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT

**P**icture this: Elizabeth Taylor enters a room, rubbing sesame oil into her skin. Arms opening wide, violet eyes flashing, she invites you to come closer: "Feel me... My arms, my neck. That's right, my face, too."

It happened to me, and I did, and I can tell you the oil is the best moisturizer around. She chuckles.

She looks into the mirror, she says, and she sees "something that needs to be fixed, dear."

After reminding me to watch what promises to be her knockout performance in "Sweet Bird of Youth," airing Oct. 1 on NBC, the conversation turns serious, for Elizabeth tells me she remains haunted by a TURNING POINT, the 1983 death of her friend Rock Hudson that prompted her to singlehandedly raise \$15 million as chairperson of the American Foundation for AIDS Research.

"Rock," she says simply, "was my sweetest friend and I miss him terribly."

A favorite memory?

"Oh yes," she smiles hazily, thinking back to the set of "Giant" in 1955: "Walking in a summer storm in Texas, collecting hailstones the size of golf balls and putting them in our Bloody Marys!"

Her worst memory was a visit to Hudson a few days before his death: "I've never seen a more painful, cruel, degrading death," she whispers, now close to tears. "When I saw Rock the day before he died, he didn't know me—he had no idea where he was. So lonely. The brain, mercifully, seems to totally disintegrate."

And there has been little peace for Taylor since.

"I'm sick and tired of people blaming gay men for AIDS. It was an accident that the disease was picked up by homosexuals in Haiti.

"AIDS," Elizabeth says, "is not a sin, it's a disease—and the insanity of homophobia has got to stop.

"The government has cold scientific knowledge, but I don't think it's heard about AIDS from an emotional heterosexual woman like me. I'm not an endangered species—although I've had blood transfusions, so maybe I am. We're all potential victims."

Not to be stopped, Elizabeth leaves me with these words:

"Whatever happened to compassion? And to caring? What happened to the Ten Commandments? How dare so-called religious people say it was God's idea, His wrath to kill the homosexuals. We're all God's children."



*Glenn Plaskin with Elizabeth Taylor.*

Glenn Plaskin profiles today's celebrities in his sensitive, revealing column, TURNING POINT. More intimate than an interview, TURNING POINT is the private story about one special moment in a celebrity's life. An important moment that contributed to their success and happiness. A key moment that will forever stand in their memory. A TURNING POINT.

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*Glenn Plaskin's Turning Point interviews include:*

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