

Cassandra Peterson - The Woman Behind the Hollywood Icon Elvira, Mistress of the Dark Reveals Never-Before-Shared Details About Her Life In a New Tell-All Memoir

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Published to coincide with the 40th Anniversary of ‘Elvira’ and in conjunction with the author’s 70th birthday, archetypical horror hostess and pop-culture icon Cassandra Peterson has penned a hauntingly, uninhibited memoir entitled ***Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark*** (Hachette Books; September 21, 2021, ISBN, 9780306874352; \$29.00; Hardcover). In the book actress **Cassandra Peterson** candidly reveals for the first time intimate details about a brutal sexual assault by a famous athlete, that she is happily celebrating a 19-year relationship with the woman who is the love of her life, her lifelong fascination with the macabre that led her to the title of Mistress of Dark, and much more. Peterson’s 40-year career as Elvira includes an IMAX movie, books, more than a thousand licensed products, and the eponymous films “Elvira, Mistress of the Dark” and “Elvira’s Haunted Hills.”

Unique and at times scandalous, ***Yours Cruelly, Elvira*** tells the story of a small-town girl's journey to becoming the world's most glamorous Hollywood Halloween icon. Elvira came to life in 1981, when Cassandra, then a struggling actress, auditioned at local LA channel KHJ as a presenter for its late-night horror movies. She channeled her inner vixen and cloaked the newfound persona with ghoulish charm – nailing the job that helped her to become an “overnight” success. Before becoming the “Queen of Halloween,” Cassandra had always identified with the disenfranchised, maligned creatures in horror movies – an association she developed at eighteen months old when she grabbed a boiling pot of water from the stove and suffered third-degree burns that covered 35% of her body.

Other intimate details in ***Yours Cruelly, Elvira*** that go beyond Cassandra’s first-time revelation of rape and of her nearly two-decade love affair with a woman, include:

- her journey as a seventeen-year-old Las Vegas showgirl
- her recollection of chasing rock stars – from Jimi Hendrix and Jimmy Page to the Animals
- the one-on-one late-night conversation with Elvis Presley that changed her life

- her wild night with Tom Jones
- her hysterical repartee with Sammy Davis, Jr.
- her uncomfortable moment with Frank Sinatra
- her experiences performing with The Groundlings, working with Paul Reubens and Phil Hartman
- the behind-the-scenes tension backstage during her appearance on SNL
- her battles with Coors and the company's ironic sense of ethics
- her firsthand account of a neighbor's murder
- her adventures while living in a "haunted house"
- her work with PETA
- her 25-year marriage, which ended in divorce
- how the character of Elvira was born!

Cassandra explains, "I was determined not to let my burns define me, so I set out on my own at fourteen, and by seventeen I was performing as the youngest showgirl in Las Vegas history, where I found myself in some very adult situations. My book details a lifetime of crazy escapades – some wild and exhilarating, others shocking and sad – either way, it's been one hell of a ride!"

To interview Cassandra Peterson or to request a review copy of the book, please contact Justin Loeber, Christine Finnegan, and Anna Badoian at Mouth Digital + Public Relations, 212-260-7576; media@mouthdigitalpr.com; or Lauren Rosenthal at Hachette Books, 212-364-0513; lauren.rosenthal@hbgusa.com

Suggested Interview Questions for Cassandra Peterson

Author of *Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memoirs of the Mistress of the Dark*

(To arrange an interview, contact Justin, Christine, and Anna at 212-260-7576 or media@mouthdigitalpr.com)

1. You're releasing your memoir, in conjunction with the 40 Anniversary of the character you created, known as 'Elvira,' and your 70 birthday. Why write a tell-all now?
2. In your book, you detail your survival of third-degree burns covering more than a third of your body when you were not quite two years old. Tell us how this incident informed your early fascination with society's marginalized misfits.
3. Talk about the story behind the casting call and how you became Elvira.

4. Was there one moment when you realized that Elvira had become a household name? (you had finally “made it”.)
5. How did the LA TV station, KHJ, handle the show’s overnight success?
6. Talk about your introduction to horror movies at eight years old.
7. In , you reveal for the first time that you have been in a nineteen-year relationship with your female assistant. Do you consider yourself a lesbian? If not, why are you coming out of the closet (so to speak) now with this news? Is your partner excited or nervous about publishing your private relationship in the book?
8. One of the more first-time revelations in the book is that Wilt Chamberlain raped you. Now that the late basketball star is no longer with us, why reveal this for the first time?
9. At seventeen, you were the youngest showgirl at Las Vegas’ Dunes Hotel. Talk about that experience -- being a teenager in such an adult world.
10. ***Yours Cruelly, Elvira***
11. How did Elvis Presley change the course of your career and life?
12. As a struggling young actress in LA, you took acting classes with Lynda Carter and Debra Winger and you did improv with The Groundlings, where you worked with Paul Reubens and Phil Hartman. Did any of their acting/comedic methods help you develop as an actor?
13. Tell us about the making of “Elvira: Mistress of the Dark,” and the legacy of the beloved cult classic.
14. Why do you think that Elvira became and continues to be such a fan favorite icon?
15. Do you feel your character as Elvira trumped other acting opportunities?
16. What is your affiliation with PETA?
17. Do you have plans of retiring as Elvira anytime soon? Do you think Elvira can still be a sexy 70-year old...and beyond?
18. Where can people buy the book and where can people learn more about you?

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Tags

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ELVIRA

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