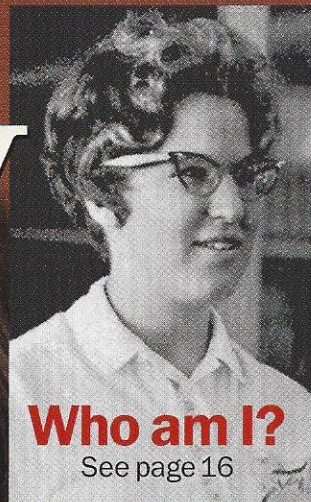


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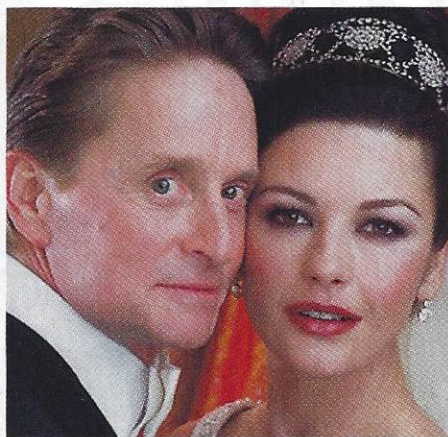


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CELEBRITY DOSSIER

NAME: Catherine Zeta-Jones**DATE OF BIRTH:** September 25, 1969**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Mumbles, Wales**PARENTS:** Father, David, ran a chocolate factory and mother, Patricia, worked as a seamstress in a tailor shop**SIBLINGS:** Brothers David and Lyndon**MARRIAGE:** Actor Michael Douglas, November 18, 2000**CHILDREN:** Dylan Michael, born August 8, 2000**NUGGET:** Growing up, Zeta-Jones idolized Ginger Rogers, Rita Hayworth, and Lauren Bacall. Her *Zorro* co-star, Anthony Hopkins, praises her for following in their footsteps: "She personifies a return to an old-fashioned movie-goddess time."

The Douglas/Zeta-Jones wedding at New York's Plaza Hotel cost \$2 million and was attended by friends, family, and showbiz A-listers

Nothing seems to scare her—not the prying British tabloids that were scheming to stake out the nuptials (false rumors of the time and place were leaked to throw reporters off the trail). Not the pressure of promoting a new movie, *Traffic*, in which she stars for the first time (but never actually appears in the same scenes) with Douglas. In the film, she is also six months pregnant, "not exactly sexy," she laughs. "But it was so liberating, not having to worry about how I looked—because I looked *huge*."

In fact, the only thing that was giving her "a bit of butterflies" was the idea of walking down the aisle in front of 300-plus guests (including Goldie Hawn, Meg Ryan, Russell Crowe, Martha Stewart) at the estimated \$2 million November 18 ceremony at New York's Plaza Hotel. "I know it's ridiculous to feel nervous, because Michael and I do so much publicly, and I've been onstage since I was a child. But this is different. *This is life.*"



Working mom: Zeta-Jones was six months pregnant with Dylan when she shot Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*

And this is Zeta-Jones' life, a joyful hustle and bustle about which she rarely utters a complaint. Co-stars such as Antonio Banderas, her leading man in *The Mask of Zorro*, describe her as determined and energetic; she prefers "focused" and "fun."

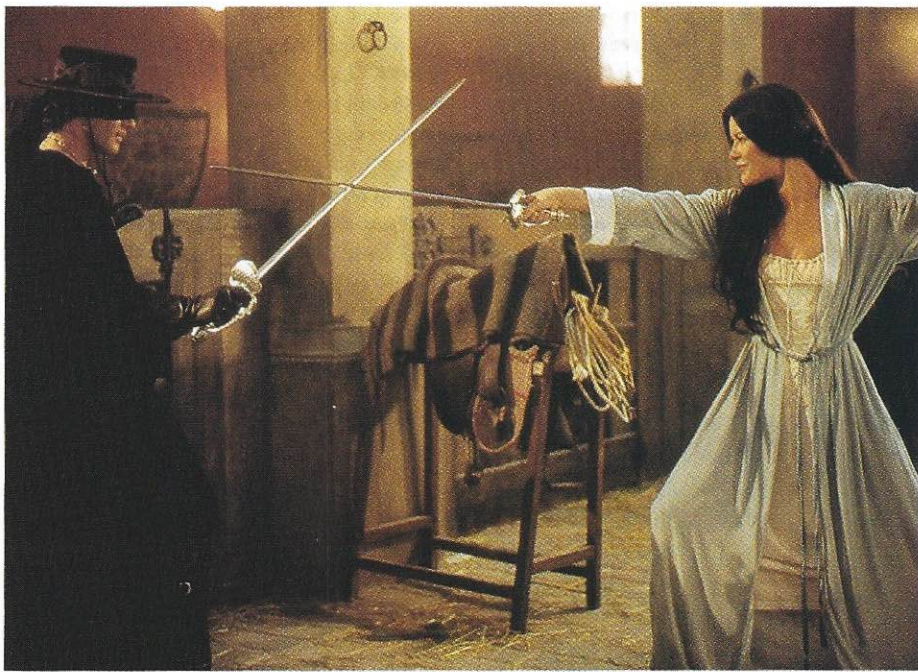
"I think it's wonderful when people say you're great to work with," she notes. "Talent aside, you have to be nice to be around. You're spending three or four months with a group, working so closely, and there's no room for ego. And believe me, when they're casting a movie, they do call around and ask questions: 'What's she like on a set? Is she okay?'"

Temper tantrums and diva-esque demands are simply not the Zeta-Jones style. Confident and fun-loving, she's more the type who walks around humming a merry tune. "I'm always singing—my son will probably sing before he speaks because he has to listen to me all the time. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me at all."

She was born on September 25, 1969. (Exactly 25 years after Michael Douglas' birthday.) Her hometown in Wales was a major breeding ground for talent. "Mumbles is a pretty fishing village on the outskirts of Swansea that was blitzed in the war and had to be rebuilt," she explains. "On the surface, it's a very quiet, end-of-the-line place—it's literally the last stop on the train from London. But Tony Hopkins, Richard Burton, Stanley Baker, and Tom Jones are all from that area, so there must be something in the water."

She was named for both of her grandmothers: Kathleen and Zeta. "Everyone thinks I put in 'Zeta' to sound more exotic because Catherine Jones is so boring—but it really is the name I was given."

Her father, David, ran a local confectionary and a vending machine business and her mother, Pat, was a seamstress in a



With Antonio Banderas in her breakthrough movie, *The Mask of Zorro*. "It was an amazing time," Zeta-Jones says. "I knew that it was going to do great things for me being surrounded by such great people."



The racy British TV series made Zeta-Jones a star

tailor shop. "It was a little like growing up in Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory," Zeta-Jones recalls. "Every other kid was crazy on candy, and sweets for me were like, 'Yeah, well, maybe later...' Daddy used to smell of sugar all the time."

Young Catherine—who wore out the records of '80s pop bands like Spandau Ballet and movie soundtracks like *Fame* and *Grease*—would tear pictures out of



With Sean Connery in 1999's *Entrapment*



Spielberg noticed her in the TV mini-series *Titanic*

fashion magazines and ask her mother to copy the looks for her. "She could sew them easily, so I was quite stylish in my pirate jackets and ruffled collars and such."

But beyond singing and dancing to her favorite tunes in the living room, Zeta-Jones yearned to perform in public. "From an early age, I knew what I wanted to do," she says. She was always involved in amateur theater and studied ballet and tap—winning a ma-

lor British tap-dancing title in 1982—yet she had her sights set beyond her small town: London's famed Theaterland in the West End. "There were big search parties that came from London and went around the country looking for kids to do musicals in the West End and I auditioned and got in. That gave me the bounce."

Her career took off quickly: At 11, she was plucked to play an orphan in the West End production of *Annie*, and by 14, she was cast as a chorus member in the musical *Bugsy Malone*. Shortly after, the show's producers offered her the lead in a touring production of *The Pajama Game*. Well on her way at only 15, she left school and moved to London to get her Equity card and pursue acting full time. It took her only two years to land a part in the chorus of a major London revival of *42nd Street*. Then—like the musical's heroine who skyrockets from obscurity to stardom—she understudied the injured lead. The night she went on, producer David Merrick was in the audience, and shortly after, she was asked to assume the part full time.

So was fronting a major West End musical tough for a young kid? "I was 15 going on 25," she explains. I always wanted to be older, and I think leaving home so young toughened me up. As a parent now, I look back at how my folks must have felt letting me go off like that—it must have been terribly hard. But they saw I had a passion and they didn't stand in my way."

When *42nd Street* closed, Zeta-Jones took a year off from acting and went to France where she recorded a few albums. (*In the Arms of Love*, *I Can't Help Myself*, and *For All Time* rake in big bucks on eBay auctions. "Probably because that's the only place you can still find them," she says. "Thankfully, they've disappeared!") Song and dance, she assumed, would be her career. "The last thing in the world I thought I would be was a TV or movie actress," she says. "I always pictured myself on the stage."

Yet the camera loved her. She made a movie—*Les 1001 Nuits* in which she played Scheherazade—before putting in a three-year stint on the racy British TV series *The Darling Buds of May* (think *Dynasty* set overseas). Her character Mariette, as Zeta-Jones describes it, was "the buxom daughter in this family that eats and drinks, has lots of sex, and doesn't pay tax. It was larger than life, and it really became a phenomenon."

As did Zeta-Jones—virtually overnight. "It was like living under a microscope," she recalls. "My name and my face were in all

The Dazzling Catherine Zeta-Jones

BY SHERYL BERK

Keeping up with Ms. Jones these days isn't easy, especially since—at the time of our interview—she's less than a week away from becoming Mrs. Michael Douglas. There are last-minute wedding details to be tied up, phone calls to be made, and her fidgety three-month-old Dylan (with that familiar Douglas cleft in his chin) whose “nappie” needs changing. It's taken several days of schedule juggling to get to this point, and Catherine Zeta-Jones—quite adept at racing around in strappy high heels—still has dozens of

things left on her To-Do list. She makes up for the lack of time by speaking a mile a minute in a lilting Welsh accent, all the while insisting she'll get everything accomplished.

“I often wake up and go, ‘Are you crazy? To get married three months after you've just had a baby?’ But Michael and I just keep reminding ourselves this is a really happy, special time, even with all the plans and organization and logistics...” She takes a deep breath. “You know, it's pretty simple. If you just chill out, it's gonna be fine.”



the tabloids. I'd go out and have lunch with a friend and suddenly they'd report us in a torrid affair. It was just unbelievable." She was linked with everyone from royalty to rock stars and the paparazzi were so persistent that they set up a surveillance system outside her home and chased her around on motorcycle. "I crashed my car into a lamppost trying to get away from them," she says. "I had never experienced this extreme attention, and it was very disturbing at the time. Yet looking back, it really stood me in good stead for what's happened later in my life. I know now that I can't let it upset me—it's just tomorrow's fish and chips paper."

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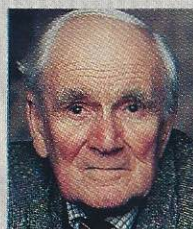
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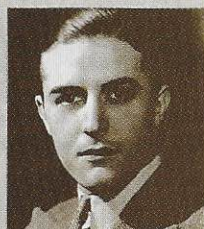
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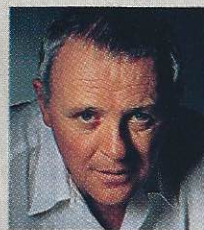
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(Continued on page 108)

her agents advised her against taking the "risky" role, her instincts once again were right. It earned her an Oscar nomination

nappy, she told *Glamour* recently. That's when I started therapy and started to become the person that I am now."

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pregnancy. I'd be six months by the time we shot it." She convinced Soderbergh that the character of Helena would be "enhanced" if she too was pregnant. He gave it some thought and agreed to a rewrite—only asking one thing of her: that Zeta-Jones speak in her real accent onscreen for the first time.

"I wanted her to be as loose as possible," Soderbergh explains, "to not be thinking about it. She'd be trying to give a performance and at the same time trying to make sure her accent was spot-on. It would always occupy a portion of her brain."

In the film (also starring Dennis Quaid, Benicio Del Toro, and Amy Irving) Zeta-Jones plays a woman who is shocked to find out that her life has been built on drug money. "She is determined that nobody is going to take her life or her children's futures away from her," says Zeta-Jones of her scheming character. "She will do whatever she has to do."

She and Douglas were only on the set together for one day: his character—the newly appointed Washington drug czar—never interacts with Helena. "We really do want to work together on a movie, but you know it has to be the right thing. I think it's hard for real couples to play onscreen couples. We're looking for something we can do that would break the mold. It shouldn't be The Michael Douglas/Catherine Zeta-Jones Show."

Finding the time to make a movie together, however, is easier said than done. Both actors have thriving independent careers. Douglas is producing and starring in the dark comedy *One Night at McCool's*, which is set to be released this spring, and Zeta-Jones is planning a number of new projects, including the Billy Crystal-penned *America's Sweethearts* co-starring Julia Roberts.

She's also producing a film ("I'm not good at adding up the math but I'm good at putting people together," she says), and rumors persist that Elizabeth Taylor herself has suggested Zeta-Jones play her in an upcoming movie about Montgomery Clift.

"Wow!" Zeta-Jones gasps. "I hadn't heard that one." She's been a longtime fan of the legendary actress. "We go way back," she jokes. "Just when *Annie* closed, I was about 12, and she was starring in *The Little Foxes* in the West End. My mother took me to the stage door at the Victoria Palace Theatre to wait for her before a matinee. I brought her daffodils—the Welsh national flower—and I remember she was wearing big, black sunglasses. I asked her to take them off—I wanted to see those famous lavender eyes—and she replied, 'Oh, it's too early for that,

honey!'"

Perhaps La Liz should take a cue from Catherine: "I'm a firm believer in 'it's never too early, it's never too late...'" she insists. "I don't think there's any reason in the world you can't have or do it all. Why not? I'm gonna give it a shot." ●

SHERYL BERK IS SENIOR ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR OF THIS MAGAZINE.

Malcolm X from page 67

lowed an atmosphere of jealousy and intrigue to fester at the sect's Chicago headquarters. Malcolm demanded purity. By the autumn of 1963, he and the Chicago leadership were actively hostile toward each other. On March 8, 1964, Malcolm announced that he was leaving the Nation of Islam to form a "black nationalist party" that would work to heighten the political consciousness of American blacks. The Black Muslim hierarchy was embarrassed and furious at the departure of its most famous member. Murder was in the air. Minister Louis X—known later as Louis Farrakhan—wrote, "Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death." For his part, Malcolm told a journalist that the Nation of Islam "can't afford to let me live...I know where the bodies are buried."

Malcolm now embarked on the remarkable last year of his life, during which time he sought answers to his deepest questions about America, race, Africa, and God. Free of the theocracy to which he had given more than a decade of his life, he began investigating orthodox Islam, which is color-blind. In the spring of 1964 he made a pilgrimage to the Middle East and wrote in the *New York Times* that many white Muslims he met there showed him kinship and love. He decided that white people weren't devils. He still felt deep anger toward white America—whites in the U.S. were still the enemy of blacks, he said, until their behavior proved otherwise—but he began to talk less about rage and more about how racism could perhaps be obliterated from this country through Islamic teachings. He became an accredited minister of Sunni Islam. And he began using a new name: El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz.

"I have no idea," he replied when asked in December of '64 what came next. He was playing it by ear, feeling his way toward what he could accept as true and important, investigating many things, including Islamic theology, the anti-colonial "Third World" movement, and socialism. He worked with the terrible haste of a man who knew he could stop a bullet at any moment. Virtually every day in that last year he was haunted by the possibility of violent death at the hands

the tabloids. I'd go out and have lunch with a friend and suddenly they'd report us in a torrid affair. It was just unbelievable." She was linked with everyone from royalty to rock stars and the paparazzi were so persistent that they set up a surveillance system outside her home and chased her around on motorcycle. "I crashed my car into a lamppost trying to get away from them," she says. "I had never experienced this extreme attention, and it was very disturbing at the time. Yet looking back, it really stood me in good stead for what's happened later in my life. I know now that I can't let it upset me—it's just tomorrow's fish and chips paper."

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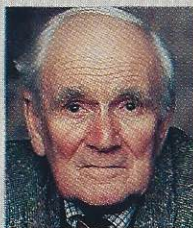
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