



*When Liz*  
**SPARKLED**  
*on CBS*

Clockwise from left:  
 Fran Drescher, Jean Smart,  
 Mary McDonnell, Nancy  
 McKeon, Candice Bergen  
 and Elizabeth Taylor

Sitcom stars remember Elizabeth Taylor's  
 glittering guest appearances

**I**N A LONG-RUNNING AD for her name-sake perfume, Elizabeth Taylor proclaimed that her diamonds had always brought her luck. And they've always brought us laughs.

In 1970, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burton—and Elizabeth's famous 69-carat diamond ring—appeared on one of the best-remembered episodes of CBS' *Here's Lucy*. And in 1996, shrewd businesswoman Taylor made a deal with the network: To promote her new fragrance, Black Pearls, the violet-eyed star would make special "crossover" cameo appearances on the Feb. 26 episodes of each of CBS' four Monday night sitcoms.

In tribute to the Oscar-winning actress and tireless philanthropist, who died in March at 79, CBS asked the stars of those four shows—a Who's Who of the TV funny ladies of their generation—to share their experiences working with a legend. — *Jim Colucci*

**Fran Drescher, *The Nanny***

"On *The Nanny*, because Maxwell Sheffield was in show business, we often had famous guest stars playing themselves. But Elizabeth Taylor was a living legend—the one star who for Fran Fine and [her mother] Sylvia was even beyond Barbra Streisand. We wanted to make her seem queenly.

"When she came on the set, we were given the heads-up that she liked to be called Elizabeth, not Liz. She didn't really want any blocking, to move much within the scene, so we had her walk in and sit down on the couch, with the rest of us going crazy around her.

"She was so lovely, and after the show she stayed to take pictures, with everyone else standing behind where she sat on the couch. I remember later, Renee Taylor [who played Sylvia] decided she'd like a copy of the photo, and found out from her people that it would cost

her \$150, 'because Miss Taylor won't release any photos unless she has a retoucher work on them.' And Renee was like, 'Oy, \$150? But it would be so nice on my piano at home ...' So finally she said, 'All right, I'll give you the \$150—but tell them to give me whatever Liz is getting.'"

### Faith Ford, *Murphy Brown*

"Elizabeth Taylor couldn't have been more lovely. She had zero attitude—she was who she was. There was a certain amount of history behind her when she walked into a room, but she was also just so funny. I remember thinking what a great laugh she had.

"They'd given her a dressing room right next to mine. They were former bungalows at Warner Brothers, and one day I walked out to find Elizabeth Taylor sitting there on what she came to call her 'veranda,' which was just the little walkway to the dressing room. She had her little dog with her, and was just working on her lines, sipping on a cold drink, and said appreciatively, 'Such a beautiful veranda out here!'

"I remember asking if I could get her anything, and she said, 'No, dear, you're just so lovely.' And then I remember her thanking me for my service in fighting AIDS. She said, 'I've been told that you always try to do things, and that means a lot to me. No matter what happens, I want you to continue your service.' That was one of the things that impressed me most about her. Of all things she could have said or not said, she mentioned that. It became what I call a 'gotcha' for me, to always remember that example. And I always will. It will always be a moment that I will hold near and dear to my heart."

### Nancy McKeon, *Can't Hurry Love*

"It was our first year of *Can't Hurry Love* and we were already having a great time—and then to get a guest star like Elizabeth Taylor, you can imagine how thrilling it was. We filled her dressing room with flowers, and other surprises like gifts from Tiffany. We wanted to make everything very classy for her. And when she got to set, she could not have been nicer, more appreciative—or more funny.

"A few of the other actors on the show were just getting their feet wet in the business, and so to have this presence like

Elizabeth Taylor on the set, to sprinkle a little fairy dust on us, was magical. It's amazing to get to play make-believe with the great ones.

"I've been working since I was 2, and I know Elizabeth started as a child as well. The fact that she'd worked for that long and not lost her sense of kindness was very special for us. To see that kind of example like Elizabeth Taylor, it makes you want to go out of your way more for others. And then after the taping, she wrote me a beautiful thank-you note, which she did not have to do. I still have it, of course!"



Decades before she appeared on *Murphy Brown* in 1996, top, Taylor tussled with Lucille Ball on an episode of *Here's Lucy*.

### Jean Smart, *High Society*

"It was so exciting to work with probably the most famous actress of all time, and someone I've always thought of as the most beautiful woman in the world. That's the fun part—to meet someone I've seen my entire life, whose incredible films I've always watched. And she could not have been sweeter, and was of course absolutely gorgeous.

"We did a photo shoot with all the gals [from all four Monday shows] together, which was also so much fun. Elizabeth was there among us, and was very reserved and down to earth. For a photo shoot, I remember remarking how we were all having a good time. It was, after all, a hilarious group of women.

"Unfortunately now, with Elizabeth's passing, it's the end of an era for film. There was a time for the movie industry that's really now gone forever. Elizabeth Taylor was one of the last connections to that time—and, of course, one of the greatest."

### Mary McDonnell, *High Society*

"Working with Elizabeth Taylor that week on *High Society* was a thrill of a lifetime. She was so open and curi-

ous and innocent—much more so than the rest of us, who had nothing on her on any level. She brought a playfulness and a love of life to her work on the show. She was hilariously funny and completely professional. My impression was when you were working with her, you were working with a human being. She never lost her humanity, and certainly never had to pull a star trip. She just *was*." 🍷