

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jamie Lee Curtis

Elisa Leonelli · Thursday, September 9th, 2021

Now that [Jamie Lee Curtis](#) has received a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Film Festival, I reflect on my relationship with her that has spanned over 40 years, and I congratulate her.



Jamie Lee Curtis (c) Elisa Leonelli 1988

I first met Jamie in 1980, when I interviewed her for *The Fog* by John Carpenter, I then spoke with her numerous times for many of her movies and TV series, such as *Perfect* (1985) with John Travolta, *A Fish Called Wanda* (1988) with John Cleese, *Anything But Love* (1989), *My Girl* (1991), *The Heidi Chronicles* (1995), *House Arrest* (1996), *Freaky Friday* (2003), *You Again* (2010), *Scream Queens* (2015-2016), *Knives Out* (2019).



Jamie Lee Curtis (c) Elisa Leonelli 1988

Most memorably in June 1988 I photographed Jamie on assignment for *The Village Voice*, on the rooftop of PMK, with the blessing of her publicist. I often met her at the Golden Globes, a celebration that she rarely missed, having been nominated seven times and won twice. She was always friendly and down to earth, with a bawdy sense of humor.



Jamie Lee Curtis (c) HFPA 1995

See her here in 1995 when she won Best Actress in a comedy for *True Lies* directed by James Cameron with Arnold Schwarzenegger.





And here in 1990 when she won Best Actress for the comedy TV series *Anything But Love* (1989-1992).

I met her husband Christopher Guest at the home of my ex-husband, Stuart Birnbaum, who had produced and co-written his comedy special *Flakes* in 1977. You may [watch it at this link](#) on the website for *The Chicken Little Comedy Show*, that I created in 2014 to remember our fun 1972 weekly production at KEMO-TV in San Francisco and the 1974 comedy special at KCET in Los Angeles, *Beneath the War of the Worlds*.



Jamie Lee Curtis, Christopher Guest (c) HFPA 1995

Jamie's father [Tony Curtis](#) had been my childhood crush. I'm not sure why, but maybe because I had seen him play the magician in *Houdini* (1953). I loved him in movies like *Trapeze* (1955) with Burt Lancaster and Gina Lollobrigida, *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), *The Defiant Ones* (1958) with Sidney Poitier, *Some Like It Hot* (1959) by Billy Wilder with Jack Lemmon and Marilyn Monroe. In 2008 I read his autobiography *American Prince: A Memoir*.

I had seen Jamie's mother [Janet Leigh](#) in *Psycho* (1960) by Alfred Hitchcock starring my teenage crush Anthony Perkins.





Elisa Leonelli, Jamie Lee Curtis (c) HFPA 1988

In 1988 I wrote an interview with Jamie Lee Curtis for *Elle*, Italy, in 1990 I wrote her profile for the Italian film monthly *Ciak*, when I was their Los Angeles Correspondent from 1987 to 1994. [Click here to see it](#). I wrote more interviews with Jamie for the Italian publications *Marie Claire*, *Gioia* and *Donna Moderna*.

As a mother myself, I admire Jamie for writing a series of children's books such as *Tell Me Again About The Night I was Born* (1996), I rejoice at the news of the 2019 wedding of her daughter Annie, and I praise her support for her trans daughter Ruby.

To coincide with Jamie's award in Venice, on September 8, before the screening of *Halloween Kills*, sequel to her film debut in *Halloween* (1978) directed by John Carpenter, I edited for the [Golden Globes website](#) some quotes from an exclusive interview she gave to the journalists of the Hollywood Foreign Press in 1981, where she talked about her parents, and I selected a 1980 headshot from the extensive HFPA photo Archives that I curate.

Best wishes to Jamie and her family.

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