Remembering
A FRIEND

ation, wonderful restaurants and the luxury shops are all crowded with customers. They enhance the attractiveness and richness of this town. Today, my friend should be happy his father had made such a choice.

One hears that Ahmad Shah, the last king of the Qajar dynasty had fallen in love with Montreux, charmed by its beauty. Whenever he visited Switzerland, he made sure to spend some time in Montreux and stay in his favourite hotel known as the "Hôtel des Trois Couronnes, or Three Crowns Hotel," since two other royal heads of states also frequented the "palace." The owners of the hotel boast and rejoice when they speak of their history

easy. I never succeeded in finding a reasonably comfortable chair in the whole house where I could sit and relax for a few minutes. The heavy furniture gives the large red carpet in the drawing room little chance to bring its beauty to the eyes of the beholder. All over the room is full of framed pictures, reminiscent of recent memories and years passed. It is commonly said that the owner's collections of photographs are unique in both quantity and quality.

In all these years they have only added one room, a sort of veranda, to the main part. That is the very single room that so generously and

daughter in Geneva was going give birth to a child and wanted h father to be close by. This was a w come coincidence as well and an o portunity I could not afford to mi After fifteen years, I started packi the bags, getting ready for the trip. Throughout the years, Montre has been the residence of my nol friend. It is not far from Geneva, only takes an hour to reach Montreu His residence is known as "Villa Roses".

"When dad bought this proper for a whole week I refused to talk him," he recalls "it was a little villa with no interest, one can even say was a gloomy grim place. Besides

yet hardly exposed to onlookers. The ground floor consists of four simple

the same simplicity as the ground floor. It serves as the living area of

tourists, a happening place for the youth; and a popular corner for the

with Sony Music, because we had given them an image.

I was over the moon. I told my wife that we could be a great directing/producing team. She didn't want to hear it. She suggested I continue selling real estate. This rubbed me the wrong way. Three months later, I asked for a divorce.

A few months after that I met an African-American young lady in Orange County who was a music video producer. Within six weeks, I moved in with her and began working on rap videos as a production assistant. I worked up the ranks, and in a short time became a producer. All in all, I've produced around 80 music videos. Thus far, I've produced/directed over 350 music videos, commercials, branded content, etc.

Q: Where were you born, raised and educated? What is your family like and where do you currently call home?

A: I was born in Clapham, London, in 1965. When I was six months of age, my parents moved back to Yousefabad, Tehran. I lived there until I was 13 years old.

At the age of 6 I developed chronic asthma and almost died 4 times. My mother's mother was English and lived in London with her Iranian husband (my grandfather). Every summer I would be sent to London for treatment of my asthma.

In 1977, my parents bought a small one- bedroom condo on Abbey Road. The top right floor of the building featured on the Beatles Abbey Road album cover — it was the floor I lived on. Once the Revolution took place, my father's name was put on a blacklist, as he was a Freemason. We were not able to go back to Tehran.

As my father was educated in Carmel, he decided to move to California, and settled in Irvine. Being Iranian in Irvine back then wasn't easy. We were constantly the victims of hate and racism. I was very small in height and weight back then, so I was an easy target for fights. At an early age, I learned how to fight back.

My parents weren't the best business people, so we were always struggling for money. My first job was at the Orange County Swap Meet (flea market) on the weekends, where I would sell towels and sheets for a guy from Brooklyn, NY. I actually learned a lot from that gentleman. While at high school, I had a variety of jobs in sales, from waiting tables, to parking cars, to bartending.

I went to Cal State Fullerton and got a degree in International Marketing. I then became a realtor, and the top selling agent for Century 21 Professional Realty.

I now live in Culver City. I am married to a half-French, half-English lady whom I met in the south of France. We have a 6-year old boy named Arya Michael Rahimi and have a little baby girl on the way.

Q: What is your relationship with Iran? Have you visited Iran recently and what was your impression?

Gobi and Tupac from 7 Dayz

A: I may have been born in the UK, but I'm Iranian through and through. I love my people and culture, and am honored and proud to call myself an Iranian. I have visited Iran twice in the last 5 years. Going back felt like a homecoming. I think we have one of the most beautiful countries in the world, as well as one of the most beautiful and soulful people on the planet. I hope to spend more time there, and pray that one day, the people of Iran will have access to the West as they did when I was a kid growing up in Tehran.

Q: There is a large population of young, educated and creative Iranians vying to come to the West. What career advice do you have for them?

A: Never give up. Align with good people who know more than you. Never give up.

the owner. A narrow, crooked stairway joins the two storeys.

When I saw him after a lapse of twenty-seven long years, I could easily read the marks of aging; traces of passing of time were easily visible on his face. Despite several surgical operations, he still stands in good posture though often supported by a long black and unsmooth walking stick when moving around. His mind is alert and sharp, his memory keen and even brighter than ever. He recalls all the events of the past decades of his life in minute details with days, months and years. Nothing ever escapes his discerning attention.

That day, by happy coincidence he was hosting Queen Fawzia the first wife of the Shah of Iran and mother of his ex-wife, Princess Shahnaz. She was much shrunk by advanced age; her hearing was weakened, but the cruel hand of time had spared, perhaps cunningly, remnants of that legendary beauty.

Queen Fawzia apparently had an apartment in the neighbourhood of Lausanne and was visiting Switzerland for medical check-up and recovery. She left for Cairo the following day.

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Zahedi has not changed his old habits. With meticulous care and discipline he makes sure everything is well organised. He is an early bird, continues to walk as much as he can, though the distances tend to become shorter every now and then

lunch. His dinner is served around 7.30. He continues to swim, have some moments for sport, and a medical massage therapy every other day. In the evenings he watches the news on an American TV channel before retiring to bed at 11.30. Then dawns another day and the same rituals. For the past several years he has been spending some of his time writing his memoirs. The fruits of his efforts, Volume One of his memoirs that covers his "Childhood to the end of his mission as Ambassador in London" will soon be on displayed in the windows of major bookshops. Three or at least two more volumes are in the early stages.

The day these memoirs are completed and published they will shed light on many major events of the past decades; and most certainly present an original vision of diplomacy which would bring new ideas to the political arena of leadership. The two "Ambassadorial Missions in Washington and the five years he served as Iran's Foreign Minister", seem to be the subjects of the next two volumes. The "Memories of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs" are the most important for him.

Bringing this ambitious project to its conclusion need a great deal of planning, concentration, sacrifice and research. In one of the last days of my visit I raised an intriguing question and brought up the subject of the memoirs of Asadullah Alam. I then

In Montreux, as everywhere else, Zahedi cannot stay alone. Several friends are always around. He has companions in the diplomatic circles of Bern, participates in many social events; numerous friends, Iranian and foreign, regularly come to visit him and they do not leave him alone. In the few days that I stayed with him in Montreux I discovered the wide range of his social engagements. In one morning he received a famous American journalist, Arnaud BORCHGRAVE and his wife, Alexandra with whom he was acquainted from the old days in Washington. He is now at the head of the "American Institute of Strategic Studies" which is an accredited centre of reflections. He then met with a distinguished personality from Utah State University in Salt Lake City and his wife who had come to visit him and finalise the details of a major ceremony the university intended to launch in his honour. This is the university where Zahedi studied and from which he graduated. He received them with his traditional hospitality, made sure that the scholarly visitors would enjoy their time and find a chance to visit as much of Switzerland and the attractions of the neighbouring areas as possible.

He then was expecting a visit from Professor Abbas Milani, who was attending a conference in London. He wanted him to participate in the world-famous Montreux Jazz Fes-

being wordy or garrulous; the qual- I was amazed how informed h

Municipality of Nyon: The truth is that Zahedi is no more a stranger in the community. His courteous conduct and gentle treatment of others has secured him a distinct place in the heart of the citizens. No matter whether riding in the streets in his old Rolls Royce or walking with his cane on the pavements, most people immediately recognize him; they all approach him with a kind smile on their faces and welcoming words on their lips. A shopkeeper who sees him caught in an unexpected torrential rain, invites him inside and asks him to stay till the skies become more clement and nature's anger has subsided.

In the Health Club of Montreux Palace, he is by far the most famous member. Everyone calls him by his name and inquire about his health. A few talented Iranians who have worked hard and managed to open a restaurant in town, when they see him passing by, leave their customers, forget about their job and try to get close and talk to him; such is the warm atmosphere surrounding him which attracts many.

People speak of everything to him; a medical doctor who has immigrated from Eastern Europe, lives in Montreux and runs a clinic with the help of his wife, is treated like his own son. Discretely, he follows Zahedi's activities and tries to find if there is a need for some help at this stage of his life. The French chef of a restaurant in the famous hotel, rushes from the kitchen in his uniform to greet him and asks if he is satisfied with the quality of the food. A beautiful young shopkeeper and an old black man who plays a musical instrument in the street run towards him with joy, showering him with kind kisses.

One day after having witnessed the genuine sentiments of the citizens towards him, I said in jest, "with such degree of popularity, why doesn't he run for the post of the governor of the region"? With a sweet smile, he returned that after all "it was not a bad idea except for the fact he does not yet master their language the way he should".

The relation of Zahedi with Montreux is like that of a guest and a loving host, affectionate, friendly, balanced and reciprocal. Once again it seems that he has found his relative calm and the town is happy to host such a highly distinguished guest. The souvenirs of his decades in Montreux could justly constitute the subject of the last volume of his memoirs, an epilogue to a long tale of a life with so many adventures, so full of ebbs and flows. Should he choose to add some personal touches, revealing the inner side of his personality, his personal views and anecdotes, his memoirs would also read as a true narrative, a best-selling novel.

For the moment he says his efforts are concentrated on a struggle to survive; "life is tough, it is an endless battle".

Zahedi has no public or hidden political activities. All his heart and mind are devoted to his native land, his beloved Iran, of which he thinks with true affection and aspiration.

In Montreux, Zahedi has become much wiser, more intelligent and certainly much more experienced.

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