



with throughout history: how do we maintain our Jewish identity while also participating in the culture around us? Has there been a time in your life when your Jewish identity has come into conflict with the world around you? How did you resolve that conflict?

Well, certainly when I was a child in Jersey City, that was very hard. But in 45 years, I've never felt that conflict in Orlando. I have mostly Jewish friends, and I worked at the J for 20 years. Only once, I went to a department store in Orlando, and I overheard a salesperson say, "Did you try to Jew them down?" That really got to me—but then on the other hand, I didn't think they really meant it; it's an expression, their parents probably taught them that. I can't think of anything earth-shattering I've gone through. The biggest memory is from my childhood, that "Harriet killed Christ!"



What a horrible thing to hear so young. The final two films I'd like to talk about are *A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto* and *Wet Dog*. Both of these stories deal with hidden Jewish identity, either long-hidden and unknown to one character, or purposefully hidden for another character's safety. Have you ever felt pressured to hide your Judaism? What did you decide to do—and looking back, was it the right choice?

You know what I'm afraid of, it's...I have many Stars of David. And I don't wear them anymore, and that really bothers me. I want to wear them, but I have a fear. If I'm going to be around other Jews, I wear it—but going to the store, I don't. I hope my grandchildren will be able to wear their Stars of David with pride. I have a lot of pride about being Jewish, I claim my last name as Jewish, but I won't wear it out. My heirlooms are very important to me, and I hope to pass them down.



Without giving away too many spoilers, one film concludes with a beautiful recovery of Jewish heritage for one of the characters. Speaking of heirlooms, is there something from your own Jewish history that is particularly meaningful to you?

There is something. My son is going to be 60 soon, but when he was about 18 or 20, we went to Jamaica as a family. Jeff took off by himself and came back and said, "I have a surprise for you guys for your anniversary." He'd found a Jamaican woodworker and he had made an absolutely beautiful Hanukkah. It's really nice. And of course, I have tchotchkes from Israel that mean something to me. My husband and I traveled a lot, and we always found something, but the Jewish ones mean the most.