

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

CONTACT MIKE COHEN
mcohen@jewishtelegraph.com
Tel: 0161 741 2637Patrick
arrives for
Israeli film**STAR TREK** actor Patrick Stewart has arrived in Israel to appear in a film by director Reshef Levy.Stewart, also famous for his role in *X-Men*, flew in to the Jewish state at the weekend to film scenes for *Hunting Elephants*.

He will play an eccentric British lord who gets mixed up with a group of Israeli misfits.

The Israelis hatch a plan to rob a bank and use the money to save their family home.

Stewart replaced *Fawcety Towers* actor John Cleese, who reportedly withdrew through ill health.

Yorkshireman Stewart said during a press conference that he had visited Israel last year for a short time and was desperate to return.

"I told my family and friends that I wanted to come back and help," he said. "I am happy to be here, not as a tourist, but as part of an Israeli movie production."

He added that he plans to learn more about Israel's situation during his stay.

Car park hard rock fan became a rabbi

BY ALEX ZATMAN

HEAVY Metal *Parking Lot* became a cult classic documentary that captured metalhead culture at its zenith in 1986.

But for the next decade, Jewish filmmakers John Heyn and Jeff Krulik knew nothing of its popularity.

The 17-minutes long documentary — recently released on DVD by Wienerworld — was filmed in the car park of a concert arena in the pair's home state of Maryland before a concert by the band heavy metal legends Judas Priest.

One of the rock fans interviewed is now a rabbi.

John and Jeff were both aspiring film directors in their 20s living in Washington DC when Jeff placed an article in a local paper about a project he was working on.

John explained: "He was doing something about movie palaces that were closing down in the DC area."

Jeff continued: "I had my phone number in the article because I was looking for anybody with information or material."

"John had beaten me to it. He had recently finished a film about that. So he got in touch with me and we hit it off."

John had attended film school, but Jeff had not.

"I had an interest in film and television," Jeff said. "I



CULT CLASSIC: John Heyn, left, and Jeff Krulik

was running a community studio at the time and I basically had free video equipment. I taught myself, but I learned a lot from John.

"We both just had a lot of our own talent as well."

They met up in 1985 for the first time. Just six months later they were making *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*.

The pair set about looking at the faces and stories of car parks.

John said: "One of the reasons we got along so well is that we had the same interest in filmmaking and subversive subcultures. We were drawn to eccentric material and I had this idea of metalheads."

"The film speaks for itself. It is pretty spontaneous. We were there as anthropological explorers."

The difficulty they had in getting picked up by fans and distributors was that the internet had not been

invented yet.

Jeff explained: "There was no way to make things go viral unless you had a major distributor pick it up."

"We shot it on video and festivals would not take video at that time. We knew we had something special. We got a lot of positive reaction from our friends, but it could only be shown on video."

They faced a chorus of rejections from TV producers and distributors. They handed it out to friends and interested fans.

"It wound up on the West Coast after we had stopped showing it," John said.

"At that time, unbeknown to us, it was being circulated on the West Coast where it got into the hands of musicians and a video store in Los Angeles. We only got wind of this in 1994."

Friend Sofia Coppola, daughter of *The Godfather*

trilogy director Francis Ford Coppola, was a young actress and producer at the time.

The Oscar-winning director had tracked the pair down so she could include it in a TV show.

Jeff said: "We were happy to do it. That was really the first concrete inkling that it had become a cult video."

"We were off to the races at that point. The legend has sunk in. I think it holds up well, it stands the test of time."

"It wasn't intended to be that way, but it was an excellent time capsule of a period of time that existed in rock and roll and youth culture. We captured it."

John continued: "It still packs a punch."

Not only was it a testament to that period of culture and music, it also provides a documented past of a man who is studying to become a rabbi.

Robbie Ludwick was a heavy metal fan who happened to be in the car park where the film was made.

The rocker also displayed a prominent Magen David over his hairy chest.

Years later he was tracked down as Zev Zalman Ludwick — and he now plays in bluegrass bands the Sinai Mountain Boys and the Zion Mountain Boys.

Nowadays he is a Breslov chassid, following in the footsteps of his brother Lazer Brody.

Among the almost two hours of extras on the DVD include shorts filmed in the car parks at a Neil Diamond concert and JK Rowling book signing.



Penn is the oddest Nazi hunter ever

THERE have been many films about Nazi hunters, but none have been as weird as *This Must Be The Place*, released on DVD and Blu-ray by Trinity this week.

Sean Penn plays bored rock star Cheyenne in Paolo Sorrentino's oddball film.

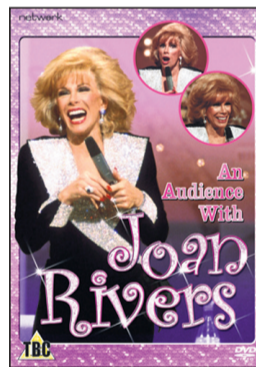
Learning his father is close to death, he travels to New York in the hope of being reconciled with him during his final hours, only to arrive too late.

But after discovering his father's plight in Auschwitz at the hands of SS Officer Aloise Muller, Cheyenne teams up with Nazi hunter Mordecai Midler (Judd Hirsch) to find him.

Extras include interviews with Sorrentino, Hirsch, Eve Hewson, and David Byrne along with seven deleted scenes. The Blu-ray also includes the original Cannes version of the film and the Sundance edit.

The *Jewish Telegraph* has five copies of *This Must Be The Place* to give away.

To enter, name the 'material girl' who was once married to Sean Penn.



Joan's tribute

AT the height of her fame in this country, Jewish comedienne Joan Rivers was given her own tribute show by ITV. And now, *An Audience With Joan Rivers*, is being released on DVD by Network on Monday — 28 years after its transmission.The *Jewish Telegraph* has three copies of *An Audience With Joan Rivers* to give away. To enter, complete Joan's famous catchphrase, Can We ****?

Enter both competitions at DVD competition, Jewish Telegraph, 11 Park Hill, Bury Old Road, Manchester M25 0HH or email competitions@jewishtelegraph.com by August 24. Please include a full name, postal address and email address where available.

DVD winners

IN DARKNESS DVD: Victor Brim, Manchester; Gil Amroon, Manchester; Mark Bodner, Manchester; M Levy, Liverpool; Ian Wareing, Liverpool. PRISONERS OF WAR BOXSETS: David Mattan, Leeds; Laura Gordon, Glasgow; Angie Rose, Glasgow. Prizes will be posted to winners.

Gavron documents 'Jewish' tribes in Africa

BY RINA BASSIST

FILMMAKER Laurence Gavron is on a journey to document lost Jewish tribes in Africa.

French-born Gavron, who has made Senegal her home since 1989, says she was immediately taken by the project, which combines her passion for Africa with the mystery of rediscovering Judaism.

Black Jews, Juifs noir en Afrique focuses on a dozen African tribes — in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and other countries — each with a Jewish story.

Some claim to be descendants of the Bible's 10 Lost Tribes. Others believe that their ancestors were Jews who emigrated from Judea to Yemen looking for gold.

Rabbinical authorities have not accepted any of the groups as Jewish under halacha, although all the tribes strive to be recognised as such at some level or another.

Edith Bruder, who has been studying these Jewish groups for more than a decade and wrote the book *The black Jews of Africa, History, Identity, Religion*, turned to Gavron for the film.

"In sub-Saharan Africa, you can find 'Judaic' tribes in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Uganda, Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe and even in Sao Tome and other countries. There are many of them," Bruder said. "It is really a vast subject."

The two women are documenting Sabbath celebrations in remote African villages, Ghanaian Jews practicing circumcision and Jewish-African traditional marriage ceremonies.

They have even been deep into the forests filming black Jews preparing



EXPLORATION: Laurence Gavron

their 'kosher' meals — in their own tradition, the way the Torah explains it simply — not mixing the meat of the veal with its mother's cow milk.

Filming a Shabbat service in Ghana was a moving experience, Gavron says.

"At the end, I was really very touched and almost started crying," she said.

The French connection between Bruder and Gavron seems almost predestined: Gavron with her fascination for Africa and for her Jewish roots, and Bruder's researching of "Jewish-related subjects" for most of her academic career. Their producer, too, is French — Anne Schushman of Scuch Productions.

"I am very interested in Jewish people, being one, and in blacks, living in Africa and having become Senegalese," Gavron said. "So black Jews is something that was more than perfect for me."

In the introduction to her documentary project, Gavron writes, "Who has the right to proclaim himself a Jew? Who can assert his connection to Judaism? Are these black Jews really a

part of the Jewish people? And if not, why do they wish to be included?"

Her own connection to Judaism has mostly been background music, she says, and making the film has "rekindled" those feelings.

Gavron, who also writes detective stories, organises cultural evenings and curates photo expositions, recently made history in her adopted homeland.

In July, she became the first woman toubab (Senegalese naturalised white person) to be on an electoral list for parliament. With a victory, she would have become the first Jewish member of Senegal's parliament.

Gavron, 57, hadn't given much thought to political involvement in the

I am attached to my Jewish identity

Muslim-dominated country until just a few months ago.

At a cocktail party in capital Dakar, she spoke to Mamadou Lamine Diallo, who heads Tekki, a left-wing party.

"I told him how much I share with him the values defended by his party: transparency, citizenship activism and ethics," she said. "He immediately asked me if I cared to join as a candidate for the upcoming elections."

The offer "enchanted me," Gavron said. "I felt it was a wonderful way to repay this country, which has embraced me without any restraint or hesitation. It is my way to pay my gratitude back to

the Senegalese people."

Gavron was able to run only because the Senegalese parliament adopting an equal gender representation act two years ago, obliging political parties to present an equal number of male and female candidates.

Although she did not win the election, the experience convinced her to remain politically active — and she believes the results would be different the next time around.

Gavron splits her time between France, Africa and Israel. Although a Senegal citizen who makes her permanent home in Dakar, she says that when she visits Paris, she suddenly feels that is home again, as if she never left the place.

Israel, meanwhile, remains her spiritual homeland.

Her first visit to Senegal, a former French colony in western Africa, came in 1987 for an international film festival. She continued to go back and forth before making it her home in 1989.

Widowed for several years by then, Gavron says she decided it was time for a real change. She became a Senegalese citizen in 2007.

The night before she left Paris for the permanent move to Dakar, Gavron says she was inexplicably drawn to visit the Jewish quarter of Paris.

"I curiously found myself walking towards the Marais," she recalls, where she bought a mezzuzah.

"Being Jewish is important for me, even though I do not practice Judaism every day," she said. "I am attached to my Jewish identity and to the cultural elements which differentiate me from others."