



## I'd Be The Girl Next Door Except For One Little Problem: Memoir Of A Life In Hiding

**Joan Denson**

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Except For One Little Problem  
Memoir of A Life In Hiding**

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Price: \$14.95

Publisher: Barricade Books  
Fort Lee, N.J.

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Joan Denson was the American Dream except for one little problem: she was a lesbian. This is a memoir of the girl-next-door who faces her homosexuality and finds herself unwelcome in her surroundings.

A child during WWII, the author came of age reading The Diary of Anne Frank. The memories of oppression and suffering of the innocent so captured her imagination that she struck up a friendship with Anne Frank's father and visited Anne's annex, where she found in her desire for Anne a hidden piece of herself.

By early adulthood Denson absorbed the culture of the fifties, an era famous for its "loud events and quiet discontents." With a husband and children, she coveted suburban bliss as much as the next girl. But something was amiss. That something came in the form of a lesbian experience that led her to realize what had been missing all along.

A precursor to the "lipstick lesbian" the author, now a prominent Beverly Hills Psychotherapist, recounts the struggles, joys, and humor of growing up homosexual in an era of repression. Her memoir provides a first-person account of the evolution of sexual mores over the last thirty years.

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ARTS  
Film

# Courageous

Jon Avnet's NBC movie  
"Uprising" Jews

by Tom Tugend  
Contributing Editor

ON APRIL 18, 1943, AS THE VAUNTED GERMAN ARMY marched in to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto, a few hundred Jewish resistance fighters, armed with pistols, rifles and homemade Molotov cocktails, confronted the Nazi soldiers and held them at bay for almost a month.

The ghetto fighters "chose to live and die honorably in a dishonorable world and to take control of their own destiny when the world had abandoned them," says filmmaker Jon Avnet.

Avnet, as director, executive producer and co-writer, has been the driving force behind the miniseries "Uprising," which will air in two two-hour segments on Nov. 4 and 5, from 9 to 11 p.m. on NBC.

The completion of "Uprising" wraps up an intensive seven-year campaign by Avnet, a successful commercial filmmaker, against the "canard" that all 6 million Jews went without protest to their deaths during the Holocaust.

The closest current analogy to the ghetto fighters, in Avnet's mind, is represented by the passengers aboard United Airlines flight no. 93 on Sept. 11, who rushed the terrorists of their hijacked plane, in the near certainty that they would all die.

Cleaving closely to the facts, the makers of this docudrama have based their story mainly on the memoirs of the few who survived the destruction of the ghetto.

The film's timeline starts at the beginning of 1943, when the 450,000 Jews once crammed into the Warsaw Ghetto had been reduced to 60,000 by deportations, starvation and disease.

Among this remnant was the nucleus of the Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa (ZOB), the Jewish Fighters Organization.

Except for a handful of "older" leaders in their mid-20s, most of the fighters were between 18 and 21 years old. Their attempts to enlist the help of the Judenrat, the Jewish Council appointed by the Nazis, failed, and the ZOB drew first blood on Jan. 18, attacking German soldiers escorting a column of deportees.

The Nazis returned in force, with tanks and artillery, on April 18, and their commander promised that the entire ghetto would be liquidated by April 20, as a birthday present to Hitler.

During the next few weeks, the surprised Germans were repeatedly beaten back, until they systematically leveled every ghetto building and flushed out holdouts with gas and fire. The last organized stand came at a bunker at Mila Street 18, although some fighters escaped to the "Aryan" side through Warsaw's sewers and lived to fight as partisans and tell their story later.

On May 16, 1943, German Gen. Jurgen Stroop declared Warsaw "Judenrein" (free of Jews), although a few Jewish snipers remained to harass the Nazi soldiers.

The dominant figure in "Uprising" is ZOB commander Mordechai Anielewicz, a 24-year old teacher, who was killed in the final battle at Mila 18. Anielewicz is portrayed by Hank Azaria, known mainly for his comedic roles, who here displays a forcefulness and intensity that is central to the credibility of "Uprising."

Other resistance fighters are played by Leelee Sobieski (Tosia Altman), Stephen Moyer (Simha "Kazik" Rotem), John Ales (Marek Edelman), as well as Sadie Frost, Radha Mitchell and Israeli actress Mili Avital.

Donald Sutherland gives a finely nuanced performance as Adam Czerniakow, the conflicted head of the Judenrat, while Jon Voight commendably avoids playing General Stroop as a one-dimensional villain.

The only miscasting appears to be David Schwimmer of "Friends" fame, who portrays Yitzhak "Antek" Zuckerman. Even with a willing suspension of disbelief, it is difficult to imagine the well-fed and neatly combed Schwimmer as the ZOB's chief operative on the "Aryan" side and the organization's commander after Anielewicz's death.

"Uprising" has moments of sheer elation, as when the ghetto