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# JEWISH *Telegraph*

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## SPORTSWORLD

**MEMORIES OF ONLY JEWISH  
CRICKETER TO HIT A TEST TON**

PAGE 28

## ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

**RACHAEL SHOWS  
HER CHARACTER**

PAGE 25



## EVENTS &amp; COMMENT

**STUDENTS CREATE WEBSITE TO  
SHARE COVID-19 ADVICE**

PAGE 4

# CORBYN THE DELUSIONAL

## Labour apologises to whistleblowers and pays damages

BY ADAM CAILLER

**LABOUR MP Dame Margaret Hodge has labelled former party leader Jeremy Corbyn "delusional", after he hit out at Labour's decision to apologise to those whistleblowers who spoke out against Labour's handling of the antisemitism crisis.**

The party, by order of new leader Sir Keir Starmer, issued a public apology during High Court proceedings on Wednesday — the culmination of the libel case brought by seven former staff members, who exposed the truth of how claims of antisemitism in the party were dealt with.

The group — Katherine Buckingham, Michael Creighton, Samuel Matthews, Daniel Hogan, Louise Withers Green, Martha Robinson and Benjamin Westerman — sued the party for defamation after the airing of the 2019 BBC *Panorama* documentary.

Mark Henderson QC, who defended Labour, said he "acknowledges that these

claims (released before and after the documentary aired) about the Claimants are untrue, and we retract and withdraw them and undertake not to repeat them".

And, in a momentous apology, a party spokesman said: "We unreservedly withdraw all allegations of bad faith, malice and lying and would like to apologise unreservedly for the distress, embarrassment and hurt caused by their publication."

"We have agreed to pay them damages."

The party paid out more than £500,000 in damages.

But just hours later, Jeremy Corbyn issued a statement,

**'Political  
decision,  
not legal'**

calling the apology a "political decision, not a legal one".

The Labour MP said: "Our legal advice was that the party had a strong defence, and the evidence in the leaked Labour report that is now the subject of an NEC inquiry led by Martin Forde QC, strengthened concerns about the role played by some of those who took part in the programme."

"The decision to settle these claims in this way is disappointing, and risks giving credibility to misleading and

inaccurate allegations about action taken to tackle antisemitism in the Labour Party in recent years."

Dame Margaret told the *Jewish Telegraph*: "His response has been completely bizarre — it's verging on the delusional."

"He's making his last great stand on his abysmal record of fighting antisemitism."

"Keir has shown that he is prepared to take determined and strong action, and this was another momentous step forward, but it is very important to note that there is a lot left to do."

Dame Margaret also said that the steps taking by Sir Keir should not be the only ones.

She added: "Antisemitism has infected the entire culture of the party — moving from the fringe to the mainstream."

"Transforming that back to one that doesn't allow it to be acceptable is a big culture change, one that needs a training and education programme and that will take time."

"People are very hurt and angry, and rebuilding confidence and trust is not something that can be rebuilt with just one act."

Lawyer Mark Lewis, who defended the whistleblowers, has been hired to take libel action against Mr Corbyn by a further 32 people and *Panorama* director John Ware.

And he has called on the

**DISAPPOINTED:**  
Jeremy Corbyn



Continued on Page 31



# Rachael shows Character to channel her gratitude

BY SIMON YAFFE

**F**ORMER American vice-president candidate Joe Lieberman, television producer Norman Lear and singer-songwriter Michael Bolton are among the well-known Jewish natives of New Haven, in Connecticut.

And musician Rachael Sage can add her name to that list — even if her stay may not be permanent.

For the New Yorker has been living in the coastal city since lockdown was implemented in America.

She had been on a country-wide seven-week tour with British singer Howard Jones when the coronavirus pandemic hit.

"The last place we were in was Pittsburgh, so I shipped back with my manager to New Haven, where she is from," Rachael told me.

"I didn't feel safe to go back to New York, so I rented an Airbnb

## Courage of my fellow cancer thrivers

and have been here ever since.

"I am on a month-to-month lease and it has worked out so far, as I am living my life and getting out and about, and enjoying a new city."

Rachael, whose new album, *Character* (MPress Records), is released in the UK today, explained that she is "pretty resilient" regarding the pandemic, which is no surprise, given the fact that she wrote it as she was recovering from treatment for endometrial cancer.

She was diagnosed in 2018, underwent surgery and then spent the next year receiving radiation and chemotherapy.

"For the first six to nine months I didn't have the energy to do anything at all — it is a cliché, but all I could concentrate on was putting one foot in front of the other," Rachael continued.



IN CHARACTER: Rachael Sage

"I had a lot to say and a lot to express, and I was so grateful and almost exuberant to connect again with my musical friends and go into the studio to record."

Her previous album, *Myopia*, was released while she was battling cancer.

And most of the tracks on *Character* are about channelling hope and gratitude.

Rachael said: "A lot of it boils down to the people in my life who were so supportive and for whom I feel so grateful."

"I had images of them in my mind and that juxtaposition of humanity at its finest and most benevolent, along with thinking about the courage of my fellow cancer thrivers."

The album's title track was written around her feelings regarding the socio-political situation in America, especially when it comes to president Donald Trump.

Rachael said: "It is horrendous and frightening that there are certain contingents which actually believe he is 'good for the Jews' because of X, Y or Z reasons, or because he has family members who are Jewish."

"It is a rationale which I have seen mostly among older Jewish people."

"I am very, very liberal and, as an artist and writer, I try to be

open and listen, and not just laterally reject points of view from people who disagree with me."

"That dynamic sometimes gives more power and credence to a narrow-minded perspective."

Rachael, who set up her MPress record label in 1998, was raised in Port Chester, New York, and was hugely influenced by The Beatles and her parents' Doo-wop albums.

She was batmitzvah and, after earning a degree in drama from California's Stanford University, went on to study at New York's prestigious Actor's Studio.

Since then, Rachael has released 14 albums, toured extensively and worked with such names as Ani DiFranco, Marc Cohn and The Animals.

Her music also featured heavily in reality TV show *Dance Moms* — with Rachael making appearances on the show.

When it came to her cancer diagnosis, she garnered as much

## I wish I had said yes to a rabbi visit

information regarding her treatment as possible — so much so that she consulted five different specialists.

Rachael explained: "I got several second opinions because I am one of those people who leaves no stone unturned, as well as being health conscious."

"All five of those top specialists were unanimous in their belief that radiotherapy and chemotherapy were the best treatments to go about beating the cancer."

"I think I went completely over the top when it came to dealing with the toxicity of the radiation and chemotherapy, though."

"I was told not to do this and that, such as exercise, but I threw all of that out of the window."

Her faith was reinforced, too, despite the fact that she decided against a hospital visit from a rabbi.

"I remember being in a cold and impersonal room in the hospital, filling in a form on an iPad,"

Rachael explained.

"I ticked the box about religion and then it asked if I would like a visit from someone of the same faith."

"I clicked 'no', because I didn't think I needed one at that point."

"I guess self-pity had something to do with it and my CEO mentality kicked in, where I thought 'I've got this and I am going to power through it by myself'."

"My dad and I actually talked about it later and I realised I wished I had said yes to a rabbi coming to visit because he or she might have had something insightful and positive to offer me."

Rachael also believes she is healthier than she was before, as she is eating better, taking supplements and doing daily exercise.

The pandemic has caused a huge amount of damage to the arts.

And Rachael, who has been performing online via her Facebook Livestream sessions 'Stay in With Sage', is devastated at the prospect of venues closing down, both in America and the UK.

"I visit the UK twice a year and I have done for at least the last decade," she said.

"I consider it to be a home away from home and there are venues which may not survive, such as the Green Note, Camden."

"I took part in a benefit concert to help raise funds — there is a lot of that kind of thing going on at the moment."

"It is about people coming together to help venues through until they can re-open, even if it will be in a limited way."

"One of the positives to come out of this in our industry is that musicians have shown themselves to be so resilient."

"There may be a shift in getting listeners away from the expectation that every live stream will be free. It cannot be perpetually free."

"For myself, gigging online every week has helped get me through all of this, and it is also a good way for people to gather together and connect."

"I take requests and have even written a song after asking people to suggest various words."

■ RachaelSage.com



FORMIDABLE: Moonyeenn Lee

## Moonyeenn first South African to vote for Oscars and Emmys

LEGENDARY South African agent and casting director Moonyeenn Lee died from complications due to coronavirus on Saturday.

Her 47 years in the film industry earned her a formidable reputation.

In 2003, Moonyeenn was nominated to the National Executive Committee of the Independent Producer's Organisation and the Film Board of Create South Africa.

In the same year, she formed Khulisa Productions to make South African films. Its first film was *Promised Land*.

Over the years, she would travel around the world introducing producers and directors to South African actors.

She represented some of South Africa's best-known actors and was a fearless defender of their rights.

She was brutally honest, a bit too much for some, but she believed in saying things as they were.

She is remembered for her quick wit, wicked sense of humour and deep understanding of her craft.

Moonyeenn received the Lionel Ngakane Lifetime Achievement Award from the South African Film & Television Awards in 2017.

A highlight in her illustrious career was when she became the first South African member of both the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which votes for the Oscars, and the Television Academy, which votes for the Emmys.

She managed the casting of films such as *The Bang Bang Club*, Oscar-winner *Tsotsi*, Oscar-nominated *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, *Hotel Ruanda*, *Blood Diamond* and *Black Panther*.

She also worked on television shows including Emmy winner *Homeland*, *The Prisoner* and *No 1 Ladies Detective Agency*.

Moonyeenn was nominated for two Emmy Awards for *The Looming Tower* and *Roots*.

Moonyeenn helped shape the lives of many actors, directors and writers through her honesty and passion.

She is survived by her daughter Cindy Lee and son David.

## Don reworks classic lyrics

OSCAR-winning lyricist Don Black has revealed he is reworking his classic musical *Tell Me On A Sunday* — with the lead becoming a gay man in this new version.

He told the BBC: "Before coronavirus, I'd started work on what I think is a great idea. We were trying out a new version of *Tell Me On A Sunday*, the musical Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote 40 years ago and I did the lyrics for. It was a hit in London and on Broadway."

"In 1979, it was a one-woman show about the romantic problems of a young Londoner living in America."

"The new version keeps the same basic era but makes the central character male and gay."

"We workshoped it in a rehearsal studio with Rebecca Frecknall as director. We knew immediately it could open up resonant new areas of the story. I'll be so delighted if we can put it together."

Don's memoir, *The Saneest Guy in the Room*, was published this week by Hachette UK.

## Gamer Reckful remembered

A PROMINENT member of the online gaming community has died at the age of 31. Byron 'Reckful' Bernstein, who took his own life, was known as one of the best *World of Warcraft* players in the world.

The American also amassed a massive following on video streaming platform Twitch, with more than 936,000 followers.

In 2011, Bernstein released a gaming film called *Reckful*, which gained one million views within its first week.

He later shifted his career into game developing, creating the game *Everland* in May.

Bernstein was open about his struggles with depression and, in January, shared a video where he talked about losing his brother, Guy, to suicide when he was six.

He explained that he was working to get better and developing his new game gave him "a sense of purpose".

Thousands of *World of Warcraft* players gathered in a virtual cathedral in the online game to pay tribute and remember him.