

Auditioning for the National Jewish Book Council

by Phyllis Chesler



Yesterday, I applied makeup, jewelry, and delivered my prepared two minute “pitch” for my latest book *Requiem for a Female Serial Killer*. There were at least thirty other authors visible on the Zoom screen. Those who presented before me wisely mentioned the honors and praise that their books had already received. I? Not a word about the fact that a previous

book of mine had won a National Jewish Book Award; naught but silence about the praise, the front page reviews, the millions of copies I'd sold.

Maybe I'm hopeless. Maybe I should have been born in another century when those with land, titles, and inherited incomes spent their time reading and writing—but never selling. Exchanging self-published works with colleagues, working in magnificent private libraries amassed over centuries. But I? I'm the proud daughter of working-class parents, a first-generation American on my father's side, a self-made woman, on her own without family support or connections. One of America's many miracles, a daughter of luck, a daughter of Jews.

And who else would take up the cause of a prostitute on trial for killing seven men, half of whom were Johns? Well—other radical feminists—that's who. And what's it got to do with Jewish sorrows, Jewish glories? Said I: Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof—a Jew must pursue justice, true justice; that's what. That's a lot.

Good luck to us all. May the Jewish Centers around the country want to hear more from each and every one of us.