



The Presidents' Tailor

FROM AUSCHWITZ TO THE WHITE HOUSE

Synopsis



Martin Greenfield survived the Holocaust to become America's greatest tailor. Now, at 95, his legacy is at stake. Can his sons Jay and Tod modernize their father's bespoke menswear empire to compete in the age of fast and cheap without sacrificing his legendary craftsmanship?

Maxmilian Grünfeld learned to sew while mending shirts for SS soldiers in Auschwitz when he was fifteen. Four years later, he re-invented himself as the American Martin Greenfield, and was making suits for the former general and future US president Dwight D. Eisenhower, who liberated him from Buchenwald in 1945. *The Presidents' Tailor* is a feature-length documentary about how one man transformed into the other against all odds.

With his infectious smile, resourcefulness, and insistence on "quality with intrinsic value", Martin Greenfield quickly rose from his humble beginnings as a floor boy at the GGG menswear factory in Brooklyn to become the highbrow tailor of choice for US presidents and celebrities alike. But times are changing. Today, Greenfield Clothiers stands alone as a beacon in the once thriving men's tailoring industry in New York City. *The Presidents' Tailor* is a poignant reminder of the distinguished craftsmanship which once gave birth to the golden age of American manufacturing.





Martin Greenfield



“You have to smile if you’re happy.
That’s when I started smiling, and I
never stopped.”

- Martin Greenfield

Martin Greenfield has always loved to work with his hands. His tailoring career began, ironically enough, in Auschwitz, when a fellow prisoner taught him to repair a guard’s old shirt. Upon wearing the shirt, Martin realized that “what you wear can change your life.”

After the war, he bought some fine cloth in Germany with his earnings from peddling black market cigarettes, and had a tailor in Prague make him two custom-made suits. He was hooked on fine clothing, and never turned back.

Now at 93, Martin’s sense of optimism makes him all the more admirable considering his painful past. He adores his wife, sons and grandchildren and fosters a family-like atmosphere at the factory. Martin’s contented character and love of life make him a pleasure to get to know on screen and all the more remarkable.

“Martin would slip notes into suits he made for politicians on suggested policy changes.”

- Michael Bloomberg (Former Mayor of New York)



Martin's Journey



“He talks about luck – number one. Help from others – number two. But also his at some point no longer fearing death.”

- Jay Greenfield

The film delves into the story of this self-made man, his successful yet quirky business in an age of mass production, and the family matters that swirl around this larger than life figure. It is a deeply personal story touching on issues of persecution, immigration, labor, family, aging and succession.

Martin Greenfield's road was hardly a smooth one. Born in Pavlovo (then Czechoslovakia, now Ukraine) in 1928, he and his family were deported to Auschwitz in 1944. Martin was later transported to Buchenwald, where General Dwight D. Eisenhower and his troops liberated him in April 1945. His mother, father, and three siblings were not as fortunate, however. Two years later, the ingenious nineteen-year-old immigrated to the United States in search of a better life. Quickly enamored with America, he shed his former identity, learned English, and became Martin Greenfield.

Before long, the young Martin took a position as a floor boy at the GGG men's clothing factory in Brooklyn. Thirty years later, he bought the factory, and developed a top-rate tailoring business with clientele that reads like a who's who of American entertainment, business, and politics, beginning with his liberator Eisenhower, who was amused by the policy notes the brash young tailor slipped into his jacket pockets.

The Greatest Tailor in the World



Martin Greenfield is widely regarded as the greatest tailor in the world. With a passion for perfection, he quickly mastered all 108 operations in making a GGG suit. His boss Mr. Goldman was impressed and turned him into a "suit doctor" – a role the young Martin took to heart.

Before long, he was making suits for the Rat Pack Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin, and later for sports legends Wayne Gretzky, Shaquille O'Neal, Patrick Ewing, along with stars like Michael Jackson, Paul Newman, Leonardo DiCaprio, Steve Buscemi, James Spader, and many more. When word got around that Greenfield Clothiers could make any suit a costume designer could imagine, Hollywood came flocking. The company was soon outfitting TV shows like *Boardwalk Empire*, *Gotham*, and *The Blacklist*, where Martin put in a cameo appearance.

Martin dressed one US president after another: Eisenhower, Gerald Ford, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and almost George W. Bush (he was on his way to fit President Bush when the 9/11 attacks struck). He even dressed Donald Trump long before he occupied the White House, and once altered a competitors' suit for former Vice-President Biden. Will President Biden continue the legacy of US presidents sporting Greenfield suits?



Martin Greenfield in the German edition of *Playboy*: "The Best Tailor in the World"

"Quality is the greatest bargain."

- Martin Greenfield



Martin with former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg



Martin, Tod, and Jay after fitting President Obama at the White House

Family & Legacy



Martin married Arlene, a nice Jewish girl from Brooklyn. They had two sons, Jay and Tod. With their help, Greenfield Clothiers became the leading manufacturer of hand-tailored menswear in America, and one of the very few that still produces in the United States.

The business is in transition, however. Tod and Jay are now running the company, while their legendary father reluctantly retired at age 91 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and the Greenfields had to close down the factory for the first time in its more than 100-year history.

While the pandemic drove many of the icons of men's high fashion into bankruptcy, Greenfield Clothiers has stayed afloat, thanks to Jay and Tod's resourcefulness. With an eye on his legacy, Martin is more eager than ever to integrate his 28-year-old grandson David into the family business as the third generation of Greenfields at Greenfield Clothiers. But is he ready to make the leap?



“I think everything that we’ve captured from his essence, that the clothing has a life and a feel to it, I think that will never change.”

- Jay Greenfield



In Martin's Footsteps



In summer 2018, Jay traveled to Europe with his son David and daughter Amy. Together, they retraced Martin's steps from his childhood home in the Carpathian Mountains of Central Europe to the two concentration camps where Martin lost his entire family: Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

Interwoven with first-hand accounts from Martin, the journey sheds new light on the young Max Grünfeld and his family, and the extraordinary circumstances under which he survived bitter cold, hunger, and beatings to embrace life with a passion and infectious smile that captivate everyone who crosses his path.



"I know ultimately he survived because his father said to him: If you survive, you honor your family by living, not by dying. And it's pretty amazing to think that from here what he's accomplished. Pretty unbelievable."

- Jay Greenfield

Filmmaker's Perspective



When I first met Martin Greenfield and his family on a trip to Brooklyn in 2017, I was immediately drawn to the qualities of resilience and compassion which imbue Martin's story. As an American filmmaker living in Berlin since 1990, I live in the constant shadow of the Holocaust, among the lingering guilt of the Germans, which permeates daily life in Germany. A Holocaust topic was bound to eventually come my way, and when it did, I seized it.

My passion is for making films firmly set in the present about how people's lives continue to be affected by past trauma. My own experiences as a father of five and the process of making my personal documentary *Forgetting Dad* (Special Jury Award IDFA 2008, short-listed for German Oscar 'Lola') have given me unique insight into family dynamics and trauma, sensitizing me to the many challenging situations Jay and Tod Greenfield face in following in the footsteps of their legendary father.

We are living in trying times where hate and negativity are omnipresent, and anti-semitism is once again on the rise. In such moments, life-affirming films like *The Presidents' Tailor* are needed more than ever. Martin Greenfield has dedicated his life to creating quality with intrinsic value. My aim is to do the same in bringing his uplifting story and this heart-warming and entertaining film to as broad an audience as possible.

- Rick Minnich



Martin Greenfield measuring director Rick Minnich for a custom-made suit.

Creative Team

Biographies



Tom Bergmann

director of photography
New York

Tom is a German-born documentary cinematographer and photographer. He shot the Oscar-nominated documentaries *Life, Animated* (Dir. Roger Ross Williams), *Abacus: Small Enough to Jail* (Dir. Steve James), and many others.

Nikola Chapelle

sound mixer
New York

Nikola is a French sound mixer who has travelled the globe recording sound for productions from BBC, MTV, Arte, France 2, NBC, PBS, Universal and many more.

Rick Minnich

writer/director/producer
Berlin

Rick is a US independent filmmaker based in Berlin and the founder, CEO, and producer at [Our Man in Berlin](#). His award-winning films include: *Heaven On Earth* (2001), *Homemade Hillbilly Jam* (2005), *Forgetting Dad* (2008, shortlisted for The German Oscar 'Lola'), *The Bomb Hunters* (2015), *The Strait Guys* (2021), *The Presidents' Tailor* (2021).

Anne Misselwitz

director of photography
Berlin

Anne is a German cinematographer whose credits include "Football Undercover" (Dir. Ayat Najafi, Teddy Award Best Documentary + Audience Award Berlinale 2008) and "The Audition" (Dir. Till Harms, Berlinale 2016).

Sebastian Löffler

sound mixer
Leipzig

Sebastian is a German freelance cameraman and sound mixer who recorded location sound during our European shoot. He also enjoys making panoramic photography virtual tours.

Peter-Hugo Scholz †

co-writer

Hugo was a German freelance journalist specializing in historical subjects, particularly the Third Reich. While researching at the Buchenwald Memorial in 2016, he came across the story of Martin Greenfield and introduced it to Rick Minnich. Together they made a 30-minute version of Martin's story for German TV before Hugo died in 2019.

Michael Mühlhaus

Composer
Berlin

Michael has worked in renowned theatres including the Burgtheater Wien, Schaubühne Berlin, Schauspiel Stuttgart, Kammerspiele München, HAU Berlin, Deutsches Theater Berlin. He composed the soundtrack for Rick Minnich's *The Bomb Hunters*, and was the orchestrator for Maren Adé's hit film *Toni Erdmann*.

André Klar

sound design/Mix
Leipzig

André Klar is a German mixing sound master who runs [Soundscape Studios](#) in Leipzig. He and his team did the sound design and mix.

Mike Brandin

producer
Leipzig

Mike Brandin is the founder, CEO and producer at [InOneMedia](#) in Leipzig. Mike is also the founder and festival director of the short film festival KURZSUECHTIG. He has produced more than a dozen short documentaries and reportage for broadcasters ARD, MDR, Arte and 3Sat, as well as numerous narrative shorts.

David Schöley

editor/color grader
Leipzig

David is editor and technical director at InOneMedia in Leipzig. David has edited a number of TV documentaries and short films, and was the assistant editor and data wrangler of the German-Saudi narrative feature *The Perfect Candidate* (Dir. Haifaa Al Mansour, nominated for the Golden Lion in Venice, 2019)

Steve Naumann

interpreter
Görlitz, Germany

Steve is a language whiz and was our interpreter in Ukraine, Poland and Germany. You'll see him in a few shots here and there during our European trip.

Creative Team

Faces to the Names



Anne Misselwitz and Sebastian Löffler in Pavlovo, Ukraine



Nikola Chapelle at Greenfield Clothiers in Brooklyn, NY



Mike Brandin, Steve Naumann, Sebastian Löffler, Rick Minnich, Anne Misselwitz, Peter-Hugo Scholz about to depart Leipzig on their European tour with the Greenfields.



Tom Bergmann, Derrill Osborn †, Martin Greenfield, Rick Minnich, Nikola Chapelle in Westhampton, NY



Rick Minnich, Nikola Chapelle and Tom Bergman filming outside Tod Greenfield's house on Long Island, NY



David Schöley

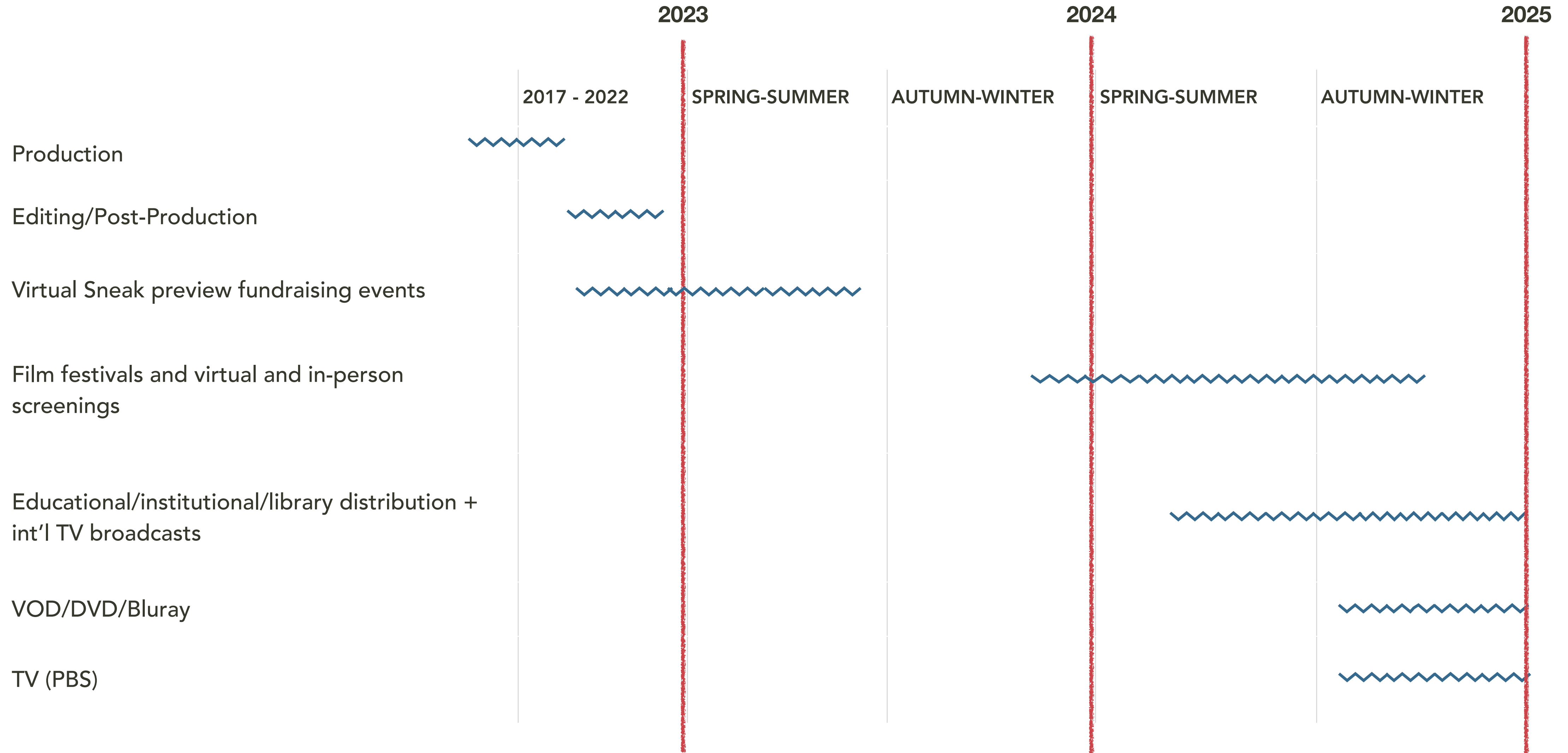


Michael Mühlhaus



André Klar at Soundscape Studios in Leipzig, Germany

Distribution Strategy





Invite your friends, family, colleagues, neighbors to a virtual or in-person sneak preview fundraiser event!



Virtual sneak preview fundraiser events run for 45-60 minutes.

Director Rick Minnich shares photos from the shoots in the US and Europe and clips from the film, and introduces ways guests can get involved in sharing Martin's journey.

With a guaranteed minimum donation total of \$5000, you will receive a free **custom-made Martin Greenfield Clothiers suit** to raffle off to your crowd!

To arrange an event, please contact us at info@ourmaninberlin.com

Or host a virtual screening of the entire 53-min. version (beginning Sept. 2023)

Complete this form

<https://www.rickfilms.de/wp-content/uploads/ScreeningRequestForm.docx>
and email to info@ourmaninberlin.com.

If you'd like to contribute but rather not host an event you can make a tax-deductible donation to our completion fund:
<https://ourmaninberlin.wedid.it>

With love and thanks

The Film Team



in one[™]
M E D I A

SLM
Sächsische Landesanstalt
für privaten Rundfunk
und neue Medien

Our Man  *in Berlin*

Freistaat
Thüringen 

FROM THE HEART
PRODUCTIONS

Kulturstiftung
des
Freistaates
Sachsen

SEED & SPARK



For enquiries contact:
Rick Minnich
Director/Writer/Producer
info@ourmaninberlin.com
Mobile: +49-179-7911131

