

THE JEWISH AMERICANS



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“THE JEWISH AMERICANS” TO PREMIERE ON PBS IN JANUARY 2008

Three-Night Epic Documentary Follows 350 Years of Jewish American History, from the First Settlement in the 17th Century to the Present, and Explores the Experience of Immigration and Assimilation

Washington, D.C. — PBS and WETA, the flagship public broadcaster in the nation’s capital, today announced that THE JEWISH AMERICANS, a three-part documentary series written and directed by the Emmy Award-winning filmmaker David Grubin, will air on PBS in January 2008.

The six-hour series, which is a production of JTN Productions; WETA Washington, D.C.; and David Grubin Productions, Inc.; in association with Thirteen/WNET New York, examines the struggle of a tiny minority to make its way into the American mainstream. While the story of Jewish life in America is emblematic of the American immigrant story, it is also a unique story of ongoing discrimination and stereotyping coupled with some of the most remarkable accomplishments in American history, the arts, commerce, science and academia.

Beginning with the first Jews to arrive in New Amsterdam in the 17th century, the film offers a revealing portrait of a people who epitomize the immigrant experience. Even as they have faced bigotry and rejection, Jews have embraced American culture while keeping alive their traditions and heritage.

Sharon Rockefeller, president and CEO of WETA, said, “THE JEWISH AMERICANS provides us with a much-appreciated opportunity to reflect on the richness of America’s Jewish heritage. Beyond that, it is also a universal story that looks at the hopes and sorrows of a diverse people as they create a home and a place in what often feels like an alien and unwelcoming land.”

Jay Sanderson, CEO of JTN Productions and one of the documentary’s executive producers, said, “This is the American story. We are a country built on the hopes and dreams of immigrants who aspired to make their mark and struggled to keep their identities. It was true 350 years ago, and it remains true today. This series celebrates these people and the country they helped build.”



A production of JTN Productions, WETA Washington, D.C. and David Grubin Productions
in association with Thirteen/WNET New York.



“Throughout the film there is a recurring theme,” filmmaker David Grubin said. “With each wave of Jewish immigration, Jews expressed an immense desire to become American while retaining their own identity. Out of this struggle emerged not just a Jewish American culture but also the integration of Jewish culture into the larger American landscape.”

The film begins with the story of the first Jewish immigrants to arrive in the American colonies — a group of 23 Jews who fled in 1654 from Brazil to New Amsterdam, where the governor, Peter Stuyvesant, tried to reject them. His superiors in the Netherlands, however, overruled him on the grounds that the Jews would contribute to the economic well-being of the colony.

THE JEWISH AMERICANS goes on to tell the stories of Jews who have participated in major milestones and cultural phases of U.S. history. Among these are: Judah P. Benjamin, who owned slaves and served as attorney general, secretary of war and secretary of state for the Confederacy; Marcus Spiegel, who fought and died for the Union and whose brother later founded the Spiegel Catalogue Company; and Anna Solomon, a 19th century frontier woman who operated a successful store and hotel in an Arizona town that would eventually be named for her family.

Other Jewish cultural and historic figures in THE JEWISH AMERICANS include Hank Greenberg, Detroit’s baseball slugger; Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish U.S. Supreme Court justice; Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the only Jewish woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court; Henry Morgenthau, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s secretary of treasury, who pushed Roosevelt to save European Jews from the Nazi concentration camps; Molly Goldberg, the first Jewish character to gain wide acceptance on radio; Carl Reiner, Sid Caesar, Jerry Stiller and other “Borscht Belt” comedians who would define American humor in the second half of the 20th century; Jerry Siegel and Joel Shuster, creators of Superman; Bess Myerson, the first Jewish Miss America; Jewish Americans involved in the Civil Rights movement during the 1960s; Betty Friedan, a founder of the modern feminist movement; and Matisyahu, the popular Hasidic rapper who combines hip-hop music with traditional Jewish themes, as well as many others.

The film examines the separation of church and state and how that opened up the door for Jewish immigrants to establish a home in which they were on equal footing with their neighbors and from which they would not have to fear being driven. THE JEWISH AMERICANS also documents a long history of anti-Semitism in the United States, epitomized by the virulent attacks of automotive magnate Henry Ford, who created a newspaper for the express purpose of spreading anti-Jewish sentiment; the lynching of Leo Frank in the South; and the establishment of Jewish quotas at elite universities.

Ultimately, however, THE JEWISH AMERICANS is an exploration of the opportunities, freedoms and prosperity that Jews have found in America, after struggling through millennia of persecution. As Dr. Amy Gutmann, president of the University of Pennsylvania, says in the film, “To be Jewish in America today is to be as free as a Jew has ever been in the modern world.”

THE JEWISH AMERICANS features narration by Emmy- and Tony-nominated actor Liev Schreiber and interviews with prominent Jewish Americans, including playwright Tony Kushner, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, comedians Carl Reiner and Sid Caesar, actor and singer Mandy Patinkin, and numerous other Jewish leaders in entertainment, academia, business and politics who share their personal reflections on what it means to be Jewish American.

Accompanying the series will be a companion book, *The Jewish Americans*, written by Beth S. Wenger and published by Doubleday, that will be on sale nationwide beginning October 23, 2007. The complete six-hour PBS broadcast will be available in January 2008 from PBS Home Video and Paramount Home Entertainment in a two-disc DVD set.

THE JEWISH AMERICANS is a production of JTN Productions; WETA Washington, D.C.; and David Grubin Productions, Inc.; in association with Thirteen/WNET New York. Director/writer/producer: David Grubin; Executive producers: Jay Sanderson of JTN Productions, Jeff Bieber and Dalton Delan of WETA, and Stephen Segaller of Thirteen/WNET; Co-producers: Rachel Buchanan and Amy Brown; Editors: Don Bernier, Susan Fanshel, George O'Donnell and Deborah Peretz; Cinematographer: James Callanan; Narrator: Liev Schreiber.

Funders for THE JEWISH AMERICANS include The National Endowment for the Humanities; Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Public Broadcasting Service; The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations; The Paul & Irma Milstein Foundation; The Skirball Foundation; The Chais Family Foundation; Harry & Belle Krupnick Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation; The Cukier, Goldstein-Goren Foundation; Ann B. Friedman; The Jesselson Family; Picower Foundation; The Annenberg Foundation; Blumenthal Fund; Nancy and Morris W. Offit; Ruth Ziegler; and Barbara Zuckerberg.

About WETA

WETA is the third-largest producing station in the public television system and the flagship public broadcaster in the nation's capital. WETA productions and co-productions include "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," "Washington Week with Gwen Ifill and *National Journal*," "In Performance at the White House: Dance Theatre of Harlem," "The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo," "Avoiding Armageddon," and documentaries by filmmaker Ken Burns, including "The War," coming to PBS in September 2007. For more information on WETA and its programs, visit the website at www.weta.org.

About JTN Productions

JTN Productions (www.jtnproductions.com) is the most acclaimed producer of Jewish television in North America with 25 years of unprecedented, award-winning success with the largest, most comprehensive library of programming and now the home of the Internet's first Jewish Online Broadcasting Network, www.jewishtvnetwork.com.

About David Grubin

David Grubin is a producer, director, writer and cinematographer who has won every major award in his field, including three George Foster Peabody Awards, two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards and nine Emmy Awards. As the president of David Grubin Productions, Inc., he has produced more than 100 films on subjects ranging from history to art, and from poetry to science. A member of the executive committee of the Society of American Historians, Grubin has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, has been a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, and is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Hamilton College. He is a member of the Directors Guild and the Writers Guild and serves on the board of directors of the Film Forum.

About Thirteen/WNET New York

Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as “Nature,” “Great Performances,” “American Masters,” “Charlie Rose,” “Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly,” “Wide Angle,” “Secrets of the Dead,” “NOW With David Brancaccio” and “Cyberchase” — as well as the work of Bill Moyers — to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as “The Ethnic Heritage Specials,” “The Thirteen Walking Tours,” “New York Voices” and “Reel New York.” Thirteen extends the impact of its television productions through educational and community outreach projects — including the Celebration of Teaching and Learning — as well as websites and other digital media platforms. More information can be found at www.thirteen.org.

CARL REINER

Depending on who you talk to, Carl Reiner is best known as co-star on the legendary television program, “Your Show of Shows” ... or as creator and co-star of “The Dick Van Dyke Show” ... or as The Interviewer of the “2000 Year Old Man” ... or as director of feature films, including “The Jerk,” “All of Me,” “Oh, God!” and “Where’s Poppa?” ... or as father of actor-writer-director-producer Rob Reiner and husband of jazz vocalist Estelle Reiner ... or as the recipient of 12 Emmy Awards ... or

Born in the Bronx, Reiner is the son of a watchmaker. At Evander Childs High School, his interest was baseball, but at age 16 he took a job as a machinist’s helper in the millinery trade. He simultaneously enrolled in drama school for eight months and landed a part as a second tenor in an updated version of “The Merry Widow.”

Reiner subsequently served in World War II, first training as a radio operator in the Air Force, followed by an assignment to Georgetown University to study French in order to become an interpreter, then as a teletype operator in the Signal Corps and later as a comedian and actor with Maurice Evans’ Special Services Entertainment Unit. He toured the Pacific for 18 months in G.I. revues.

Upon his honorable discharge in 1946, he won the leading role in the national company of “Call Me Mister,” and after three more years in various Broadway musicals, joined Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca on “Your Show of Shows.”

In 1958, his first novel, Enter Laughing, was published. An autobiographical work, the book chronicled Reiner’s frustrations as a young machinist helper in the millinery trade and his eventual entry into show business. The book subsequently became the basis for a Broadway play (adapted by Joe Stain) and feature film (directed and co-produced by Reiner) of the same name.

In 1961, Reiner conceived “The Dick Van Dyke Show,” which would become one of the most famous and best-loved sitcoms in television history. Of course, audiences have never forgotten his co-starring role on the show as the toupee-wearing producer, Alan Brady. That same year, he wrote his first feature film, “The Thrill of It All,” for Doris Day and James Garner.

Reiner’s other feature film credits as director include: “The Comic,” co-written by Reiner and Aaron Ruben; “Where’s Poppa?,” starring George Segal and Ruth Gordon; “Oh, God!,” starring George Burns; films with actor Steve Martin: “The Jerk,” “Dead Men Don’t Wear Plaid,” “The Man with Two Brains” and “All of Me”; “Summer Rental,” with John Candy; “The One and Only,” with Henry Winkler; “Summer School,” with Kirstie Alley; “Fatal Instinct,” with Armand Assante and Kate Nelligan; and “That Old Feeling,” with Bette Midler and Dennis Farina. Mr. Reiner and Mel Brooks released a CD and book with new material in October 1997, “The 2000 Year Old Man in The Year 2000.” (Harper Collins Publisher and Rhino Record Distributor)

His motion-picture acting credits include a starring role in “The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming” and featured or cameo roles in “It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World,” “The Gazebo,” “Generation,” “Dead Men Don’t Wear Plaid,” “The End” and “The Slums of Beverly Hills.” He played the part of Saul in the remake of “Ocean’s 11” in 2002. He was the voice of one of the characters in 2003’s “Good Boy.” He reprised the role of Saul in “Ocean’s 12” in 2004 and in “Ocean’s 13” in 2007. His TV acting credits include feature roles in “Beggars and Choosers,” “Family Law,” “The Bernie Mack Show,” “Crossing Jordan,” “The Bonnie Hunt Show” and, most recently, “Boston Legal.” He was the voice of one of the characters in the DreamWorks animated television show, “Father of the Pride.”

TV Land produced and broadcast an animated half-hour pilot of Reiner’s famous character, Alan Brady. CBS Television produced, along with TV Land, “The Dick Van Dyke Reunion Special Show,” which aired in 2004.

His second novel, All Kinds of Love, was published in 1993. His third novel, Continue Laughing, was published in 1995. How Paul Robeson Saved My Life, a book of short stories, was published in 1999. His latest book, My Anecdotal Life, was published in 2003, and his children’s book, Tell Me a Scary Story, was also published in 2003. The Two Thousand Year Old Man Goes to School was published in 2005. NNNNN, a novel, was published in 2006.

Reiner and his wife of 63 years (December 24), Estelle, are also parents of two other children: Annie Reiner, a poet-painter-playwright-psychoanalyst; and Lucas Reiner, a painter-screenwriter-director. They are the proud grandparents of five grandchildren. He calls all three of his children “terribly civilized, wonderful human beings.”

MANDY PATINKIN

In his 1980 Broadway debut, Mandy won a Tony Award for his role as Che in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* and was nominated in 1984 for his starring role in the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, *"Sunday in the Park with George."* In 1991 he returned to Broadway in the Tony Award-winning musical *"The Secret Garden"* and in 1997 played a sold-out engagement of his one-man concert, *"Mandy Patinkin in Concert,"* with all profits benefiting five charitable organizations. Mandy's other solo concerts, *"Celebrating Sondheim"* and *"Mamaloshen,"* have been presented both on and off Broadway.

Other stage credits include *"The Wild Party," "Falsettos," "The Winter's Tale," "The Knife," "Leave It to Beaver Is Dead," "Rebel Women Hamlet," "Trelawney of the 'Wells'," "The Shadow Box," "The Split," "Savages,"* and *"Henry IV, Part I."* Feature film credits include: *"The Choking Man," "Pinero," "Elmo in Grouchland," "Men with Guns," "The Princess Bride," "Yentl," "The Music of Chance," "Daniel," "Ragtime," "Impromptu," "The Doctor," "Alien Nation," "Dick Tracy," "The House on Carroll Street," "True Colors," "Maxie"* and *"Squanto: Indian Warrior."*

He won a 1995 Emmy Award for his critically acclaimed performance in the CBS series, *"Chicago Hope,"* and recently starred in the Showtime Original Series *"Dead Like Me."* Mandy is currently starring in the CBS hit series *"Criminal Minds"* as FBI profiler Jason Gideon. His other television appearances include the role of Kenneth Duberstein in the Showtime film *"Strange Justice,"* playing Quasimodo opposite Richard Harris in the TNT film presentation of *"The Hunchback,"* and a film version of Arthur Miller's *"Broken Glass"* for BBC/WGBH Boston.

In 1989, Mandy began his concert career at Joseph Papp's Public Theater. This coincided with the release of his first solo album titled *"Mandy Patinkin."* Since then he has toured extensively, appearing to sold-out audiences across the United States, and in Canada and London, performing songs from writers including Stephen Sondheim, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin, Randy Newman, Adam Guettel and Harry Chapin, among others.

In 1990 he released his second solo album titled *"Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Dress Casual"* on CBS Records. His 1994 recording, *"Experiment,"* on the Nonesuch label, features songs from nine decades of popular music from Irving Berlin to Alan Menken. Also recorded on the Nonesuch label is *"Oscar & Steve"* and *"Leonard Bernstein's New York."* In 1998 he debuted his most personal project, *"Mamaloshen,"* a collection of traditional, classic and contemporary songs sung entirely in Yiddish. The stage production of *"Mamaloshen"* was performed on and off Broadway and has toured throughout the country. The recording of *"Mamaloshen"* won the *Deutschen Schallplattenpreis* (Germany's equivalent of the Grammy Award).

In 2001, Nonesuch Records released *"Kidults,"* a collection of beloved songs, designed — as the title suggests — for the kid in every adult. And, in 2002, Nonesuch Records released *"Mandy Patinkin Sings Sondheim,"* a figurative journey through Sondheim's music and lyrics.

Mr. Patinkin resides in New York City with his wife, actress and writer Kathryn Grody, and their two sons.

DAVID GRUBIN

David Grubin is a producer, director, writer and cinematographer who has won every major award in his field, including three George Foster Peabody awards, two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards and nine Emmy Awards.

As a writer, he has won an Emmy Award and received four awards from the Writers Guild.

As a director, he has received three Emmy Award nominations.

As a cinematographer, he has received one Emmy Award and five Emmy Award nominations.

As the president of David Grubin Productions, Inc., Mr. Grubin has produced more than 100 films on subjects ranging from history to art and poetry to science.

Mr. Grubin's biographies of American presidents for "American Experience" on PBS have been widely acclaimed:

- "FDR," his four-and-a-half-hour biography of Franklin Roosevelt, has won many prizes, including awards from the International Documentary Association, the American Historical Association and the National Education Association.
- "LBJ," his four-hour biography of Lyndon Johnson, won the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award among many other prizes and was chosen as one of the best documentaries of 1992 by *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Newsday* and *People* magazine.
- "TR: The Story of Theodore Roosevelt," his four-hour biography of Theodore Roosevelt, won a host of awards including two Emmy Awards and a Christopher Award.
- "Truman," his four-and-a-half-hour biography of the 33rd president, received a Primetime Emmy Award and the Writers Guild Award for best documentary script.
- "Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House Divided," his six-hour biography of the Lincolns, has won many prizes and wide acclaim from critics across the country.

Some of Mr. Grubin's recent films for television include:

- "Destination America" (four hours)
- "RFK" (two hours)
- "The Secret Life of the Brain" (five hours)
- "Napoleon" (four hours)
- "Marie Antoinette" (two hours)

Mr. Grubin's five-part series for PBS, "Healing and the Mind with Bill Moyers," has won many awards, and the companion book, for which he was executive editor, rose to number one on *The New York Times* Best Sellers list, remaining on the list for 32 weeks.

His four-hour series for PBS, "Destination America," was named the best nonfiction program of 2005 by John Leonard of *New York Magazine*. His biography of Marie Antoinette, for which he won his fourth Writer's Guild Award, premiered at Versailles in October 2005 and aired on PBS in September 2006. Currently Mr. Grubin is producing a six-hour series for PBS, "The Jewish Americans," and, also for PBS, a three-hour series titled "The Mysterious Human Heart."

A member of the executive committee of the Society of American Historians, Mr. Grubin has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, has been a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, and is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Hamilton College. He is a member of the Directors Guild and the Writers Guild and serves on the board of directors of the Film Forum.

He is married to the artist Joan Grubin and lives in New York City.